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ABSTRACT

This publication presents a discussion of the status of poor urban children world-wide and the design of a five-nation study of the condition of distressed urban children. Following an introduction, Section 2 describes the urban child project designed to study and advance the plight of urban children in developing nations. Section 3 outlines the scope of the problem, including urbanization trends, migration, and issues beyond the statistics. Section 4 describes growing up urban and poor, focusing on the deteriorating environment, poverty and ethnic redistribution, the lack of appropriate shelter, child labor in the urban informal sector, lack of access to safe play spaces, and the monotony of poverty stricken communities. Section 5 describes the five studies being carried out in the Philippines, India, Kenya, Brazil, and Italy. The issues covered are childhood, families, coping strategies, communities and neighborhoods, and children in especially difficult circumstances. Also described are the study's comparative assessment of situations, street children, views on working children, and the problem in the context of the larger society. Also mentioned are an assessment of policies and programs, and interventions. Contains 108 references. (JB)

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URBAN CHILDREN IN DISTRESS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUES

Cristina S. Blanc*

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URBAN CHILDREN IN DISTRESS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUES

Cristina S. Blanc*

UCS 2

September 1992

This paper is part of the background documentation for a study on Urban Children in Distress, edited by C.S. Blanc et al., and forthcoming in early 1993.

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the UNICEF International Child Development Centre.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to demographers, the largest-ever global generation of children will be born in the 1990s. An increasing number of these children will be living in cities, especially in developing countries where four out of ten urban dwellers are expected to be under 18 years of age by the year 2000. Population growth will put severe pressures on already-strained urban environments, making them even less suitable than they are today to sustain human development (Section III).

There are already warning signals, in the South as well as the North, that the situation of urban children and their families is worsening. Clear symptoms of this deterioration are the increasing numbers of "working children, street children, abused, neglected and abandoned children, children in armed conflict and disaster" - what UNICEF has defined as "children in especially difficult circumstances" (CEDC) - appearing in cities throughout the world.

In response to these growing urgencies, the UNICEF International Child Development Centre in Florence is carrying out a comparative research project on the conditions of urban children in four developing countries (the Philippines, India, Kenya and Brazil) and one industrialized country (Italy). The Italian Country Team, coordinated by the *Istituto degli Innocenti* in Florence, has collected evidence that, despite economic development, children are facing new, and often very severe, problems in the highly urbanized North. Whether in the North or the South, children need to be given greater prominence in the concerns of policy-makers (Section II).

The project focuses on an analysis of children's situations and an analysis of programmes. It includes: (1) an analysis of CEDC, with special emphasis on street and working children and their families, and on their paths to disadvantage; and (2) the study of urban children in risk situations. These are impoverished children who live in overcrowded buildings in inner-city areas, or in makeshift shanties on the outskirts of cities. Many have dropped out of school and work in the informal sector, mainly on the street where they are often exploited. They are candidates for becoming street children, and some will, in fact, make "the street" their way of life in the future.

The issues are not always evident. Because extreme poverty coexists with extreme wealth in most cities, the urban sector may appear privileged with respect to the rural one when measured by aggregate data, while, in fact, urban poverty is very severe and on the rise. Moreover, issues are frequently more qualitative than quantitative. They concern the quality of childhood, or what it means to grow up urban, poor and deprived. There are obvious deprivations, such as a health-impairing environment and poor housing, as well as less obvious ones, today's "new deprivations", including diminishing support for children within their families and communities, decreasing socialization opportunities, and marginalization. These deprivations are leading to particularly unhealthy, disheartened, and troubled populations of young people (Section IV).

The comparative assessment of situations carried out by the five Country Teams has enabled the project to broaden its view of children in difficult circumstances: users and abusers of dangerous substances, children in conflict with the law, adolescent mothers, sexually exploited girls, children of AIDS, children of migrants, and some categories of working children are the children at highest risk world-wide. The project has also identified some of the characteristics of these children and their families, analysing their resilience and coping strategies in order to provide the basis for improved programming and for designing interventions which build upon the strengths of children, families, and communities (Section V).

To improve the social fabric of the lives of all urban children and families and ensure the well-being of those more at-risk, broadly protective and preventive policies, rather than *ad hoc* "band-aid" approaches, are needed. A comparative analysis of innovative programmes on behalf of children in the twenty cities selected for study, and of the processes of mobilization that have placed children on those municipal agendas, will provide the basis for further policy and programme proposals (Section VI).

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1970s, an adverse world-wide economic environment has severely threatened the welfare of children, youth and other vulnerable groups in both the South and the North. In many developing countries, the effects of recession have been compounded by problems of external debt, declining terms of trade, protectionism in industrialized countries, and excessive military spending. Structural adjustment programmes imposed by the international financial community have been insensitive to the problems of impoverished families.

The State of the World's Children, issued yearly by UNICEF, allows us to monitor across countries some of the major trends in children's welfare, such as mortality, morbidity, school enrolment and gender differentials. Important publications, such as *Adjustment with a Human Face* (Cornia et al. 1987), have clarified some of the ways in which adjustment policies, requiring governments to concentrate on reducing budget deficits, improving trade balances, meeting debt repayment schedules, and initiating privatization, have led to significant decreases in funding for health, education and other social programmes, thus diminishing available services and facilities, especially for vulnerable populations.

While many of these broad trends have been documented by economists, sociologists and development agencies, the complex ways in which these trends have affected the well-being of our young populations have only begun to be understood. We can often quantify how many children die or become ill, how many finish school, how many become drop-outs, and how many suffer from mild or severe malnutrition. It is, however, very much more difficult to demonstrate how existing world conditions and social transformations are creating a relatively unhealthy, particularly disheartened and troubled population of young people who are growing up with more severe problems of adjustment than ever before.

The global rise of special problems affecting children (0-18 years of age) is symptomatic of a deeper discomfort which needs to be traced to its origins. This discomfort, which is particularly acute in urban areas, can be linked to increasing poverty and to new deprivations deriving from changing social relationships and decreasing social support. The city environment itself is implicated: population pressures put severe strains on services and facilities, causing cities to be less and less able to meet the needs of children and families.

This discomfort is chronic in urban areas in the developing world, although not always clearly recorded. In most African countries and in many of the developing countries in Asia and Latin America (the Philippines and Brazil, for example), urban children are more likely than in 1980 to be born into poverty, be born prematurely, die in their first year of life,

suffer low birth weight, and have mothers who received late or no prenatal care. They are more likely to have an unemployed or severely underemployed parent, see a parent die or go to prison, live in a female-headed household, live in sub-standard housing, suffer from child abuse, drop out of primary school, and never attend secondary school, let alone university. They are more likely to be forced to work in an exploitative setting, engage in substance abuse, enter prostitution, be exposed to violence on the streets, and be affected by armed conflict. In addition, especially in Africa, they are being orphaned by AIDS or dying from this disease which in 1980 was unknown.

Problems have been more systematically documented, but hardly eradicated, in industrialized countries. In Eastern Europe, significant increases in infant mortality rates and child poverty have been registered during the 1980s, and the percentage of children in high-risk situations (whose parents are alcoholic or delinquent, for example) is high (Sipos 1991). In the United States, data have shown that, since the 1960s, nearly half of the country's black children (4.3 million), one sixth of all white children (8.1 million), and more than one fifth of all American children, including nearly one out of four children under the age of six years, are poor. Furthermore, children have often become far poorer than individuals of other age-groups, in part because policy-makers have consistently failed to give this vulnerable group the special attention it requires (Edelman 1987).

Poverty is the greatest child-killer in the highly urbanized United States of the early 1990s. This is a striking consideration. The national death rate for infants between one month and one year of age - post-neonatal mortality - actually increased by 3 per cent between 1982 and 1983. In addition, while in 1970 one out of nine babies was born into a female-headed household, by 1983 the number had risen to one out of five. Single adolescent parenthood has also increased in the United States, as jobless or poor adolescent fathers increasingly falter. In 1970, three teenage births out of ten were to single mothers; by 1983, that number had increased to more than five out of ten. A single mother under twenty-five years of age is nine times as likely to be poor as a young woman living on her own without children (Edelman 1987, Weill 1990). The percentage of births to adolescents is particularly high in the United States (52.7 per 1000 teenagers in 1981), compared, for example, with the United Kingdom (28.6 per thousand), and Sweden (14.3 per thousand).

Many other indicators of distress are available. In the United Kingdom, for example, the suicide rate of people between the ages of 15 and 34 years has increased each year between 1975 and 1987 (Lowy et al. 1990). Both obesity and anorexia nervosa, particularly

among girls, appear to be on the rise. Racial disadvantage for children is also increasing, especially in the inner-city areas where almost three fourths of the ethnic minority population lives (Bradshaw 1990).

Although, in comparison with the rural sector, the urban sector may appear economically privileged, it conceals severe problems of redistribution. Urban living is often particularly harsh and exploitative for young people because of their rapidly rising numbers, the shortcomings of municipal management, and the deterioration of the urban social and physical environment. The feelings of marginalization of urban poor families are augmented by the stark contrasts between their lives and those of more affluent urban families.

Thus, whether in the South or North, we live in an unequal world and we are faced with interlocking crises. What can we do about them?

Meeting the essential needs of our children and young people, and assuring them their rights, including the general rights to a better future, requires not only a new era of economic growth for nations in which the majority of the population is poor, but also an assurance that the poor get a fair share of the resources needed to sustain growth. Such equity and the sustainable development it would permit require, however, as the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) powerfully stated, "the cooperation of political systems that would help ensure that the distribution of resources, the direction of budgetary investments, and institutional change are sufficient to meet future needs. Success thus rests ultimately on political will".

Institutions dealing with children have often been established on the basis of narrow preoccupations and compartmentalized concerns. The general response of governments to the speed and scale of global changes has been a reluctance to acknowledge the need for institutional change.

The challenges faced are both interdependent and integrated, requiring comprehensive approaches and popular participation. Yet, the institutions which must meet those challenges tend to be independent and fragmented, working within relatively narrow mandates with closed decision-making processes. Institutions responsible for resolving children's problems are separate from those responsible for handling broader urban problems or for managing the economy. Our world will forever be one of interlocked economic and social problems; for significant improvement, the policies, people, and institutions concerned must change.

Governments have, in some cases, responded to the newly-perceived crisis. They have created new agencies and established ministries. Many have had some success within the

limits of their mandates in improving the situation, but much of their work has, of necessity, been after-the-fact repair of damage: rehabilitation, institutionalization and re-institutionalization, re-education, rebuilding urban environments and re-training. The very existence of such agencies has given many governments and their citizens the false impression that children are being protected and their conditions enhanced. Furthermore, the mandates of central economic and sectoral ministries are often limited in scope, too concerned with quantities and with the immediacies of the problems, and not concerned enough with their causes and consequences. The mandates tend to be tied to bureaucratic targets and the narrow requirements of management "efficiency". They are based on deep-seated, but often untested, assumptions about what works and what does not work. Broad evaluations to test results against initial objectives of the programmes and projects are rarely undertaken. Goals are almost never challenged, and evaluations tend to focus exclusively on pre-assigned project aims and their quantitative impact in terms of numbers of beneficiaries and speed of expenditures.

The challenge today is to make the central economic and sectoral ministries responsible for the quality of those parts of the social environment affected by their decisions, and to give agencies providing services to urban children and families at all levels more power to cope with the effects of unsustainable urban development. Ultimately, more power, accompanied by appropriate government support, must be shifted to the communities and families themselves.

Municipalities are faced with new institutional opportunities. With ongoing world-wide trends towards democratization, decentralization and privatization, combined with rising urban poor populations, cities in the 1990s have new and formidable tasks, but also new opportunities for leadership in establishing innovative social policies.

There is also a need for change within international development agencies. They must take more account of the social consequences their development work has on children. Some recognize the pressures exerted by urbanization and are beginning to investigate the impact their programmes have on urban families and communities (UNDP 1991). The Urban Section of the World Bank, for example, has issued papers on urban poverty and the effects of structural adjustment on families (World Bank 1991a). However, considering that they are the basis of our future, children, and urban children in particular, are not nearly as high on their agendas as they should be.

To anticipate and prevent serious social damage to our urban youth, we must consider the social and personal development dimensions of policy at the same time as the economic, health, and other dimensions. These dimensions should be placed on the same agendas, and located at the core of the same national and international institutions.

A major reorientation of our thinking about urban development in relationship to children's well-being is one of the chief institutional challenges of the 1990s and beyond. Meeting this challenge will require major institutional development and reform. Many countries and cities which are too poor, or too small, to have adequate managerial capacity will need financial and technical assistance and training. The changes required involve, by necessity, all countries, large and small, rich and poor, North and South.

II. THE URBAN CHILD PROJECT

Background and Objectives

The first meetings of the Consultative Group on the Urban Child, organized by the UNICEF International Child Development Center (ICDC) in Florence in 1988-9, assembled UNICEF Representatives and other professionals from Brazil, the Philippines and India, three countries where the problems of disadvantaged urban children had become particularly pressing during the 1980s; from Kenya, representing the African countries where child-related problems in cities were still relatively minor, but expected to grow during the 1990s; and from the *Istituto degli Innocenti* in Italy, a country with rapid economic growth in recent decades, but persistent forms of old and "new poverty" affecting children. The Consultative Group recognized that a fresh and more preventive perspective on children's problems was needed as a first step towards a reorientation of national policies and institutional commitments towards urban children. This new perspective would acknowledge children as important and creative human beings, as "subjects" in their own right, and would systematically address the root causes of their problems.

The Consultative Group was inspired by the experience of Brazil where problems relating to urban children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC) have been actively researched over the past two decades. Colleagues from the UNICEF office in Brazil present at the meetings described the crucial role that research, linked to action, could play in changing public opinion and ultimately bringing about important policy changes. Research

carried out in Brazil during the 1980s revolutionized assumptions about the problems faced by street children; attracted the interest of the media which had previously ignored, or sensationalized, events involving poor urban children; lent authority to the arguments presented to policy-makers; and helped concerned non-government organizations (NGOs) present their cases more systematically. Research was one of the factors contributing to the inclusion of the Chapter on the Rights of Children and Adolescents in the new constitution of Brazil, adopted in 1988 (Rizzini et al. 1992).

Since "street children", a term coined by NGOs and UNICEF, were indeed emerging as a major CEDC problem in the other countries represented at the meetings, the Consultative Group proposed that street and working children be the main focus of this first project on Urban Children, and that case studies be prepared, with the close collaboration and supervision of the UNICEF Urban Officers and Representatives, in each of the four developing countries mentioned above. An Italian team, sponsored by the institution hosting UNICEF in Florence, the *Istituto degli Innocenti*, was also formed.

It was determined that the case studies should: (1) analyse in greater depth the situations of urban children, especially street and working children; and (2) document the innovative urban and CEDC policies and programmes which had become apparent in those countries as an initial response to the problems. Although it was suggested at the time that the studies be based as much as possible on secondary material, the possibility of using an "action-research" approach was also agreed.

The five countries were selected because they face some common problems, are representative of their region, and/or represent important blocks of the world's population. They have developed, in many cases, particularly innovative programmes at national and municipal levels. Moreover, Country Teams could take advantage of research results on CEDC which have begun to become available in each of the countries.

Brazil and the Philippines have been suffering from a severely weakened economy and a very heavy debt burden. Both face extremely unequal income and asset distribution (a long-term characteristic which has become more acute since the Second World War). Both countries have experienced, to a somewhat different degree, a series of devaluations in their currency, high inflation and an accelerated erosion of standards of living. Economic constraints have been particularly severe in the extensive urban areas of both countries. This has affected the management of cities, the availability of services, and the ability of households to cope in an increasingly less supportive urban environment. During the

economic crisis occurring between 1971 and 1985, the proportion of people living in poverty in the Philippines rose from 58 to 64 per cent in rural areas, and from 40 to 56 per cent in urban areas. It was estimated in 1988 that only 48 per cent of the households in Metro Manila earned incomes equivalent to household expenditure, while 35 per cent had incomes which fell below household expenditure.

Poverty and inequitable income distribution have long been endemic to India, a country which has only recently veered towards more market-oriented policies, borrowing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and confronting the rigours of structural adjustment policies. Provisional estimates in this country, where the urbanization level reached 25.7 per cent in 1991, are that more than one fifth (20.1 per cent or 41.7 million) of the urban population was living below the poverty line in 1987-8. However, this percentage represented a marked improvement from the estimated 41.2 per cent in 1972-3, and even from the 28.1 per cent in 1983-4 (Bose 1992).

Kenya, like many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, has faced a number of very severe economic crises since the 1980s (Cornia et al. 1992). In addition, it is experiencing steady population growth and increasing urbanization, although the country as a whole was still only 17.5 per cent urban in 1989. Nairobi registered extraordinary population increases during the 1980s, mainly because of rural-to-urban migration. The urban nutritional status, especially for children, deteriorated between 1977 and 1982. In 1990, 74 per cent of the households in Nairobi were officially classified as poor by the Central Bureau of Statistics. Increasingly, these low- and very low-income households are female-headed.

Such rapid urban growth is straining government planning and management capacities, especially at municipal levels. Even collecting information on the situation of the urban poor in order to monitor the urbanization process itself is problematic. The absence of long-term planning has repercussions on the provision of basic urban services, as well as on the physical environment; and it contributes to the deterioration of the quality of life in the squatter areas and poor sections of the large cities of the developing world.

Italy, in contrast, represents a very different set of trends. The very rapid economic growth of the last few decades has created a number of social contradictions and dislocations within the country. The nationwide fertility rate is in sharp decline, going from 2.5 per thousand in 1960 to 1.4 per thousand in 1990, one of the lowest in the world. Currently 68.9 per cent urbanized, Italy is facing a recession and difficult economic and political choices related to its fiscal deficit and the requirements of the European Economic Community (EEC).

A rapidly growing influx of immigrants from the third world, and more recently from Eastern Europe, has created some social uneasiness.

The management of Italian cities is more structured and better monitored than in the developing world, partially as a result of the growing availability of advanced technology. Cities have been declining in size and are experiencing suburbanization. There are, however, many cases of unauthorized construction and poor urban planning in both northern and southern cities. Moreover, congested streets, air pollution and traffic accidents, especially involving adolescents on motorscooters, are common in all major urban areas. Pockets of severe poverty still persist in many Italian cities. Italy thus represents the "conscience" of the project by reminding other countries that economic development alone does not ensure the resolution of all children's problems - and often creates difficult new ones. Children need to become more central in the policy-makers concerns before the situation can be improved.

By December 1990, a first review of literature had been commissioned in each of the five countries and Country Teams carefully selected. Twenty cities were chosen in the five countries: São Paulo and Goiânia in Brazil; New Delhi, Bombay, Vijayawada, Cuddapah, Rahjamundhry and Warangal in India; Milan, Naples, Palermo and Florence in Italy; Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu in Kenya; Metro Manila (Caloocan City, Quezon City), Cebu, Davao and Olongapo in the Philippines. Some cities were more extensively analysed than others, depending on local circumstances and the focus of the Country Teams.

The Country Teams were interdisciplinary, including various combinations of economists, sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists, as well as NGO personnel and urban specialists. Efforts were made to form teams with a good mix of "action people" and academics from each country. All team members were nationals of the countries concerned and were provided support by UNICEF Urban Officers. A coordinator was selected for each Country Team and became responsible for integrating the various fact-finding and analytical reports into the final study.

Although each project was tailored to the needs of the specific country situation and UNICEF country programme, all Country Teams had the mandate to document three levels of problems involving urban children in selected cities:

(1) the general problems faced by all children in urban areas;

(2) the problems of urban children in difficult circumstances who live in general situations of poverty and deprivation, and who are potential candidates for more severe disadvantage; and

(3) the problems of urban children in especially difficult circumstances, that is the ones who have already "fallen through the cracks" and are facing situations of extreme disadvantage.

Country Teams were asked to analyse from different professional perspectives what had caused the problems affecting children in each country (with special attention to the crises faced by families and communities), how children were affected, and what policies and programmes had been adopted by each city to address the problems.

The basic steps of the project were as follows:

(1) Reports on different aspects of the problems (demographic, sociological, anthropological, psychological) were prepared by the professionals on each Country Team;

(2) Meetings were held under the supervision of the UNICEF Urban Officer within each country to facilitate the integration of different aspects of the study, and to produce a country report;

(3) Upon completion of the separate reports, an integrated chapter was assembled by the coordinator and prepared for publication by ICDC in this Innocenti Occasional Paper series and as the basis for a chapter of a book to be published in 1993. In many cases, a longer local version of some of the reports was also published in the country;

(4) Urban forums were held in each city to allow for discussion of the implications for action of the reports;

(5) National forums were also held in each country to facilitate a broader review of each country chapter and its implications for urban and CEDC policy changes and new programmatic thrusts;

(6) A major international meeting was planned to take place in Florence in October 1992 to allow mayors and Country Teams to exchange information and ideas about common problems, innovative strategies, and the potential for municipal-level mobilization on behalf of children. This meeting is viewed as part of the support UNICEF is providing to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the follow-up to the World Summit for Children, held in New York in September 1990. The goals for children in the 1990s agreed at that Summit include a commitment to "provide improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances and tackle the root causes of such situations."

The Novelty of the Approach

The project recognized in its early phases that individuals work in systems, and that change could best be generated by directly involving a variety of people in the collection of information, in the actual policy formulations, and in the preparation of the reports. The various reports and meetings sponsored by this first project have, therefore, never been the product of researchers alone. To different degrees and according to the context, UNICEF Urban Officers, practitioners, the decision-makers themselves, as well as children and their families, have contributed to the final product.

The approach decided upon by the Consultative Group, and subsequently adopted in the field, was "action-oriented". It might be useful to clarify here the origin of this term. Action research is a concept that emerged in the United States in the 1950s and was taken up with enthusiasm by a number of individuals and groups. The United States Indian Service, which was defined in the early 1940s as a "potential laboratory through which ethnic relations in America could be studied" advantageously by anthropologists, psychologists and policy-makers alike (Collier 1945), is one of the first examples of action research. Action research later became, with action-anthropology work in Chicago, a "synergistic collaboration" between social research (in the form of the microscopic analysis of social interaction) and the action agenda being worked out with the Fox Indians. Lewin (1947) emphasized the "many advances in theory [that] occur by studying social systems in action, and...[the] danger of sterility in research oriented only to academic publication".

During the 1960s, there was a large governmental use of action research followed by a period of relative eclipse. Assessments made during the 1970s emphasized both the pitfalls of action research and its importance. From the point of view of anthropologists and sociologists, the issues raised were related to the ownership and control of the data and the reconciliation of professional values in anthropology and sociology with "mission-oriented" activities which were often government controlled. Competence in an academic setting was not always directly related to the capacity to negotiate a viable role in what Cora Du Bois (1980) called the "power, managerial administration".

Objective analyses of a number of urban-consultantship projects in the field of urban studies in the United States (Szanton 1981, Gerard 1983) concluded that in order to be successful the projects needed: (1) a clear identification of the client, or clients, by all concerned, and the establishment of a relationship of mutual trust with those clients early on;

(2) firm and consistent endorsement of the program by those in authority; and (3) appropriate timing in the feedback of data and opinions. But even the more critical observers of the action-projects of the 1970s (Hall 1980, Gerard 1983, Cook 1984) agreed on the importance of encouraging the kind of collaborative research and development work broadly considered to be action-research. Today, the concept has reached maturity and is still well accepted, despite some of the difficulties in its application.

In the Editor's Introduction to the recent book *Children, Youth and Families: The Action Research Relationships*, Robert N. Rappoport discusses the interplay between research and action in programmes benefitting children and families. Starting with an analysis of the mutually-productive interaction between research and action in the hard sciences and technology, he then proceeds to analyse the same relationships for the social sciences where scientific knowledge is less developed and standardized, and activities less in the control of the researcher. After discussing some of the very prominent contributions to the book by authors such as Alfred Kahn, Sheila Kamerman and Edward Zigler, Rappoport concludes that "for a productive interplay between research and action, several ingredients are necessary: financial support, an openness to new ways of thinking, competence and public credibility". He also emphasizes that the main problems are often the resistance to new ideas and approaches, as well as inadequate communication (Rappoport 1985).

The action-research orientation of the study provided a challenge to the representatives of the action organizations who were members of the Country Teams in the five countries, including UNICEF Urban Officers, NGOs and government counterparts who were, in fact, the immediate "clients" of the study. It enabled and encouraged them to: a) examine what they already knew and to discover what new information was available to them; b) define the questions they would like answered; c) provide continued guidance and ensure the usefulness of what was being produced; and d) discuss and assess the action implications of the results of the study, rather than just "shelving" the final reports. Ultimately the results were meant to bring improved development for urban children and families in distress.

The action orientation of the study also provided a challenge to academic researchers who were part of the team. They were being encouraged to: a) become more effective collaborators of action organizations; b) focus on the identification and monitoring of the problems, old and new, faced by urban children; c) keep in mind the project's objective of emphasizing action-oriented initiatives; and d) produce results which could be used for

immediate advocacy with policy-makers. This approach was quite new for many team members. Some were able to rise to these new circumstances and made themselves very useful as generators of data to be presented to policy-makers, the media, and specialists in urbanization and child development. Others remained more comfortable with traditional academic approaches. In these cases, the reports required substantial editing in order to give them a more decisive policy orientation.

Despite these differences, members of the Country Teams actively collaborated in advocacy efforts being made by the UNICEF Urban Officers in each country. Some of their more extensive reports have been, or are being, published in English or in the local language, usually under the joint sponsorship of the UNICEF country offices and various academic institutions. This is the case of the Brazilian report which UNICEF co-sponsored with FLACSO; the Indian reports, prepared in collaboration with the National Planning Commission; the Philippine reports, co-sponsored with de la Salle and the Ateneo de Manila Research and Policy Centres; and the Kenya report, prepared in collaboration with the University of Nairobi. Although none of these institutions had previously worked with UNICEF, some of them became useful new academic partners not only with UNICEF but also with its most active NGO counterparts.

Again, these interactions were at times protracted and very constructive, and at other times relatively short-lived and very specific. Much depended on the personal capacity of each team member to collaborate with the others. The interactions in each country had their own particular history, but they always created new connections, and a new emphasis on children's problems. They also often prompted related new projects at the governmental level, in which team members became centrally involved as a consequence of their work on the Country Team. The child-focused centers set up by FLACSO in Brazil, the new revisions of laws relating to children and families being carried out by the Kenyan Law Reform Commission, and the new project on children and women implemented by the India National Planning Commission are examples of this multiplier effect.

Approaches and Audiences

The compiled information has come from many sources. The Country Teams have located written information by reviewing published articles, university theses or research reports, and by analysing the annual reports or evaluations of specific organizations. They have identified

and interviewed key informants at national and municipal levels. They have analysed programme evaluations and made rapid assessments of work in the field. They have also interviewed children and their families directly, discussed issues with street educators and teachers who are working closely with the children, and described community and city settings and their modes of operation.

The organizers realized in the early project phases that the research data should be demystified and made available to a wide range of people who could help to bring about change. The Country Teams have identified, and are preparing material for, the following key actors:

a) national and international development experts, technicians, academics, and substantive media experts who require more documented and informed assessments of project aims and methodology;

b) regional and municipal policy-makers, such as mayors, municipal officials and managers, and technical municipal staff;

c) NGO implementors, staff in institutions, street educators, parents, UNICEF programme staff;

d) other audiences, such as National Committees for UNICEF, development educators, and academic institutions;

e) teachers and school systems, communities, and the children themselves.

Occasional papers, policy summaries, essays and technical handbooks are specifically targeting one or more of the above audiences. In addition, multipurpose publications, based on the material collected by the Country Teams, have been prepared by journalists collaborating with ICDC. Their writing aims to be informative, interesting and easy to read in an attempt to provide new insights for readers who might not be reached by a formal, heavily documented report. These publications have proved to be very popular, and have already been actively used as advocacy tools.

III. THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

There are compelling reasons for paying particular attention to children in the urban environments of developing countries. Because of rapid urbanization, the sheer number of

urban children has been growing steadily over the last few decades, and such growth is likely to continue in the future. According to United Nations estimates (Donohue 1982), there were 369 million children under the age of 15 years living in urban agglomerations in developing countries in 1980. By the year 2000, approximately 23 per cent of the total world population of under-15 children will live in the urban agglomerations of Asia, and 21 per cent in those of Latin America (Caritas 1986). It is also estimated that four out of ten children in the developing world will be born in an urban centre by 2000, and six out of ten by 2025, if urbanization trends do not change fundamentally. In fact, in developing countries, the young now constitute the majority of the population in many urban areas.

In the heavily urbanized countries of the industrialized North, the situation is quite different demographically. Because of lowered mortality and fertility rates, the proportion of children 0-18 years of age has been steadily diminishing. In Italy for example, this age-group constituted 29 per cent of the total population in 1950, while by 1990 it represented only 21 per cent (Lorenzo 1992). However, because industrialized countries are largely urban, most children in those countries do indeed live in urban areas.

It can therefore be safely stated that children living in urban areas represent an important proportion of the children currently living both in the North and the South, and those numbers are likely to continue to grow until 2000 and beyond. Moreover, there is strong evidence that the young and the aged are the two populations most profoundly affected by the pressures and hazards of urbanization. In the case of the young, these hardships affect people who are still growing and maturing, and whose futures consequently risk being severely compromised.

Urbanization Trends

For centuries, global urban growth rates were modest. Only 3 per cent of the world's population lived in cities during the early 19th century. However, with the advent of industrialization, the pattern changed dramatically. The proportion grew from 14 per cent in 1920, to 25 per cent in 1950, to 43 per cent in 1980 (UNFPA 1986). While only 10 per cent of the world's population was urban at the beginning of this century, by 1986 the proportion had grown to 46 per cent, and is projected to reach as much as 60 per cent by 2025. This 60 per cent will still be unevenly distributed, with the most highly industrialized countries

reaching levels of up to 80 per cent, and the least industrialized ones, levels of only 42 per cent (Hauser and Gardner 1980, Armstrong and McGee 1985, Caritas 1986).

Table 1 shows the changes in urban population and the proportion of the population living in urban agglomerations in all world regions from 1950 to 2000. According to projections, about three fourths of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean, the most urbanized region in the developing world, will be living in cities in 2000, on a par with the industrialized North (and Oceania). Africa and Asia remain well under half urbanized, although urban growth rates in those regions are higher, and large-scale urbanization has been rapid. Therefore, the least urbanized countries in the world, which are also generally

Table 1: TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS IN URBAN POPULATION BY REGION
(Urban Inhabitants in Millions and as Proportion of Total Population, 1950-2000)

Region	1950 (% of total)	1970 (% of total)	1990 (% of total)	2000 (% of total)
Africa	32.2 (14.5)	82.7 (22.9)	217.4 (33.9)	352.4 (40.7)
Latin America & Caribbean	68.6 (41.5)	163.6 (57.3)	320.5 (71.5)	411.3 (76.4)
North America	106.1 (63.9)	167.1 (73.8)	207.4 (75.2)	227.7 (77.3)
Asia	265.5 (16.4)	481.1 (22.9)	1 070.4 (34.4)	1 585.4 (42.7)
Europe	221.8 (56.5)	306.6 (66.7)	365.9 (73.4)	392.2 (76.7)
Former USSR	70.8 (39.3)	137.6 (56.7)	189.9 (65.8)	208.1 (67.5)
Oceania	7.8 (61.3)	13.7 (70.7)	18.7 (70.6)	21.5 (71.3)
Developing World	285.6 (17.0)	635.8 (24.7)	1 514.7 (37.1)	2 251.4 (45.1)
Rest of World	448.2 (53.8)	698.6 (66.6)	875.5 (72.6)	946.2 (74.9)

Source: United Nations (1991)

the poorest, tend to be experiencing the highest rates of urban population growth. This is largely a result of the depressed state of their agriculture which leads to extensive rural-to-urban migration. India and countries in Africa fall very much within this category and the situation is expected to continue for at least the next decade.

However, rural-to-urban migration is not the only reason, nor often even the main one, behind urban growth. Another important element is the natural population increase that occurs in some very large cities. Despite declining birth rates and decreases in rural-to-urban migration, the populations of many large cities in Latin American, Southeast Asia and East Asia, for example, continue to grow because of the mere size of the initial population base (Preston 1988, McGee 1971, Armstrong and McGee 1985). In the developing world, the increase in the total urban population level will not be counterbalanced by a reduction in the rural population which is actually expected to increase, again largely from natural growth, to 2,868.5 million by 2000, from the 1,037.3 million rural inhabitants in 1920 (Armstrong and McGee 1985). And, of course, the natural growth of rural populations will continue to provide the basis for rural-to-urban migrations in the future.

Another important factor is the growth of primate cities. Primacy is measured by the population of the largest centre in relation to the second largest, or the following three (the four-city primacy index), or the following nine (the ten-city primacy index). Historically, the dominance of one city over a nation's urban system has often been the result of the concentration of job opportunities and the better chances for survival in those cities. In the last three decades, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Santiago del Chile, Caracas, Mexico City and Cairo, followed by Bangkok, Manila, Seoul, Baghdad, Lima and Karachi, and, more recently, Lagos, Nairobi and many others, have grown to dominate their nation's urban systems because of the concentration in these cities of economic activities, including manufacturing, public and private investments, government offices, commerce and services. This primacy resulted in part from the rapid economic growth between the 1950s and the early 1970s, conditions which are unlikely to return in the foreseeable future given recessions, the debt burdens, the protectionist barriers around Western markets, and the inefficient leadership and poor economic performance of most developing countries. Other historical and political factors contributing to rapid urbanization and primacy include the often metropolis-oriented colonial economic organizations, the process of decolonization after the Second World War with the accompanying institutional restructuring, and the removal of colonial restrictions on the free flow of people from rural, to urban, areas.

The primacy of the largest city in each country seems to be declining in some regions. Until recently in Latin America, the annual population growth rates of the largest city was usually higher than all, or most, other large cities. However, this trend has begun to change in practically all of the more populated countries in the region. Non-primate Latin American cities are growing at rates which are relatively higher than their primate cities in many cases. At the same time, medium and small centres (about 50,000 to 500,000 people, and 10,000 to 49,999 people, respectively) are growing relatively faster than rural settlements (fewer than 10,000 inhabitants) in many Latin American countries. The extent to which these changes are indicative of similar transformations in other developing regions needs to be studied.

Latin America and the Caribbean together make up the most urbanized region of the developing world with an urban population which jumped from 68.8 million in 1950 (or 41.5 per cent of the total population) to an estimated 320.5 million in 1990 (or 71.5 per cent). This urbanization rate is virtually the same as the rate for the industrialized countries (73.4 per cent in Europe and 75.2 per cent in North America). The urban population could climb to 411.3 million by 2000 (or 76.4 per cent). The different countries in the region have urbanized at different speeds. Declining rural populations have been evident in Argentina and Chile since the 1950s, in Uruguay since the 1960s, in Brazil, Jamaica and Venezuela since the 1970s, and in Cuba since the 1980s (Hardoy 1992).

Asia was relatively late in urbanizing: the urban transformation of most countries in the region really only began in the 1980s. In the 1950s, nearly all countries in the region were characterized by a low urbanization rate and an urban hierarchy often already dominated by one colonial primate city (for example Manila, Jakarta, Bangkok, Bombay, and Colombo). In 1960, the urban populations of China, or even Indonesia, for example, constituted only 19 per cent and 14.6 per cent of the total population, respectively, while North Korea (40.2 per cent) and the Philippines (30.3 per cent) had already reached higher urbanization levels (Table 2).

By the 1990s, Asia manifested a checkered pattern of urbanization with wide regional disparities. Rates range from just over 20 per cent in Sri Lanka and Thailand to 71 per cent in the more industrialized countries. Current demographic trends suggest that Asia as a whole will reach urbanization levels of between 35 and 43 per cent by 2000 (Armstrong and McGee 1985, Fawcett et al. 1984, United Nations 1991). Led by the population giants of China and India which between them have more than one third of the world's million-population cities, Asia now has more large cities with more people living in them than any other continent (Dwyer 1979).

Table 2: PROPORTION OF URBAN POPULATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES
(In percentages for 1960, 1990, 2000 [1/])

	1960	1990	2000		1960	1990	2000
ASIA				*LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN*			
Cambodia	10.3	11.6	14.5	Argentina	73.6	86.3	88.8
China	19.0	33.4	47.3	Brazil	44.9	74.9	80.6
India	18.0	27.0	32.3	Cuba	54.9	74.9	79.9
Indonesia	14.6	30.5	39.5	Ecuador	34.4	56.0	63.8
Iraq	42.9	71.3	75.3	Guatemala	32.4	39.4	44.1
Korea, Dem. Rep.	40.2	59.8	63.1	Mexico	50.8	72.6	77.4
Malaysia	25.2	43.0	51.2	Uruguay	80.1	85.5	87.3
Pakistan	22.1	32.0	37.9				
Philippines	30.3	42.6	48.9				
Sri Lanka	17.9	21.4	24.2				
Thailand	12.5	22.6	29.4				
				EUROPE			
AFRICA				France	62.4	74.3	76.7
Kenya	7.4	23.6	31.8	Italy	59.4	68.9	72.4
Morocco	29.3	48.0	55.2	Netherlands	85.0	88.5	89.2
Nigeria	14.4	35.2	43.3	Poland	47.9	61.8	66.1
Senegal	31.9	38.4	44.5	Portugal	22.1	33.6	39.6
Tanzania, U. Rep.	4.7	32.8	46.5	Sweden	72.6	84.0	85.6
Uganda	5.1	10.4	13.8	United Kingdom	85.7	89.1	90.0

Source: United Nations (1991)
[1/] Projected.

Africa is not highly urbanized by global standards, but the trend in that direction has been extremely rapid during the last three decades, and is expected to reach 42 per cent by 2000. Depending on their economic structure, different countries have reached different levels of urbanization. Africa will have an important share of the largest cities in the world by 2030-5, since their rates are growing at double or more the world rate. Nairobi is expected to reach 10 million, Lagos 26 million, Kinshasa 12 million, impressive rates considering that no city in sub-Saharan Africa exceeded 500,000 inhabitants in 1945.

Western Europe experienced the rural-to-urban demographic transition much earlier than other regions. Its urban population increased "only" fivefold in the span of 80 years (1870-1950), while it is expected that by 2030 the number of urban dwellers in the developing countries will increase sixteenfold (Deelstra and de Waart 1989). The populations of Western Europe are now ageing and projections indicate declines starting sometime after 2000. However, estimates may be modified by a number of factors including the influx of migrants from developing countries and the higher fertility rates among migrant groups.

Recent changes in European patterns of urbanization also reflect a decisive urban-to-rural migration. People have begun to move away from the city towards suburban areas and into adjacent small towns and cities, which subsequently have been increasing in size; commuters repopulate the city during the day. Milan, Turin and other large cities in Italy are showing this pattern very clearly. At times, large offices or businesses are also moving to the suburbs or even into rural areas in search of space, parking facilities, and quieter, safer surroundings.

For the period 1980-2000, the urban population of the developing world is expected to have increased by 1.15 billion people. According to projections, eight of the largest urban settlements in the world in 2000 will be in developing countries, and only one each in North America and Japan. In 1900, only one of the 10 largest cities was in what is now termed the developing world; by 1950, this number had risen to five; by 1980, of the world's 255 cities of over one million people, 116 were in the developing world, as were 15 of the world's 26 cities with over five million people (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989, Olpadwala and Goldsmith 1992). According to UNDP estimates, there will be 50 cities of more than four million inhabitants in the developing world by 2000; the number is expected to rise to 114 by 2025 (UNDP 1989).

Projections on future urbanization patterns often do not take into account particular political, environmental, and economic factors. Calcutta, for example, received over 2 million refugees after the partition of India in 1947, helping to explain subsequent projections of up to 40-50 million inhabitants by 2000, while, in actual fact, it is unlikely that the population of Calcutta will exceed 15 million by that date. Droughts or armed conflicts have lead to the particularly high actual rates of population growth in Addis Ababa, Khartoum, Kampala, Luanda, and other cities in East Africa. Assembly plants set up by foreign companies in northern Mexico (Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana, Mexicali and others) attracted migrants from rural areas causing rapid population increases. Growth began to slow down in the 1980s because of changes in the North American market.

It is also unlikely that many primate cities will continue to grow to the extent currently projected simply because further growth would be unsustainable. In many cases, the inability of the urban service-oriented economies to develop the complex activities to procure and distribute sufficient food and water for such fast-growing urban populations is glaringly obvious. Furthermore, many primate and large cities are growing over unsuitable sites, in areas subjected to periodical floods (Buenos Aires, Asuncion, Dacca, Bangkok,

Calcutta), earthquakes (Mexico City, Lima, Guatemala City, Managua, Santiago del Chile, San Salvador), landslides (Rio de Janeiro, Hong Kong, Quito, La Paz), sea-tides (Guayaquil), hurricanes (Manila), and other natural disasters.

All of these arguments suggest that: (a) the past thirty years are a poor guide to what will happen in the next thirty years; (b) stagnant or declining economic bases will probably slow the rate of population growth of many large cities; (c) despite this slow-down in growth, the natural increase of the already-huge populations will add hundreds of thousands of people to primate and other large cities every year, forcing governments to meet unprecedented challenges just to keep these cities functioning and to prevent living conditions from worsening (Hardoy 1992).

Beyond the Numbers

The demographic dimension of the problems of urban children requires special attention. Simply quoting total urban numbers or rates of urbanization does not do justice to the children's situation and may actually be distorting. By disaggregating the age-groups, one can get a clearer picture of the urban demographic situation.

Mortality rates decline steadily with economic development and the associated rising standards of living. Until fertility rates begin to decline, perhaps several decades later, there is a period of "population explosion". Industrialized countries have already experienced this demographic transition and are currently showing declines in population growth. In areas of Asia and Latin America, fertility rates have begun to fall as have population growth rates. In most of Africa, on the other hand, mortality rates are still falling, fertility rates are essentially unchanged, and population growth is consequently still accelerating, as a comparison of recent and projected population growth rates shows (Table 3).

If one focuses on children and youth by world regions, there are still different consequences of the demographic transition in different regions. In Africa as a whole, where fertility rates are still very high and mortality rates are declining only slowly, the child and youth population has reached very high levels, and is still rising significantly. In Latin America, where there has been a decline in both mortality and fertility rates, the percentage of children and youth in the total population began to decrease in the 1970s.

However, even these regional patterns are averages of the heterogeneous experiences of individual countries. The demographic situation in the five countries taking part in the

Table 3: RECENT AND PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH RATES
(1955-2025)

	1955-60	1985-90	2005-10	2020-25
World	1.86	1.73	1.33	0.98
More-Developed Regions	1.25	0.53	0.32	0.18
Less-Developed Regions	2.14	2.10	1.56	1.13

Source: Xenos (1992).

Urban Child project substantiates these points. In Kenya, the number of children under 15 years of age exceeds 30 per cent, a rate that, even according to the most optimistic projections, will not start to decline until after 2000. The overall number of children has diminished slightly in India, Brazil and the Philippines, but not yet for the 5-14 age-group where numbers are still steadily increasing. Italy has experienced low mortality rates as well as a very sharp decrease in total fertility rates during the last few decades of rapid economic development. Its population reproduction rate is negative, and fertility rates are projected to decline still further. Even within Italy, however, there are important north/south distinctions.

These ongoing trends, which still indicate a very large presence of children in the developing world, also establish absolute changes in the size of the population of the relevant age-groups:

- *0-4 age-group.* In this age-group, the developing countries are the major contributors to increases. Africa is by far the largest contributor, mainly because of the high fertility rates throughout the region. Asia is also a large contributor, especially East and South Asia, while rates for Southeast Asia are sharply negative, mainly because Indonesian and Thai fertility rates are declining.

- *5-14 age-group.* World growth in the number of children in this age-group is again dominated by additional children in developing countries, while after 1980, the numbers of children in industrialized countries began to diminish. The growth in numbers of children from developing countries, is, in absolute terms, dominated by growth in the Asian region. Among the Asian countries, those in South Asia have contributed disproportionately.

- *15-24 age-group.* The patterns are generally similar. The number of youth and young adults is declining in industrialized countries and continuing to grow rapidly in developing

countries. Africa and Asia are the major contributors. The Asian net contribution is small because some countries are gaining in this age-group while others are losing.

In conclusion, in most developing countries, absolute numbers of children and youth will continue to rise for decades to come, but there will be considerable variations by age-groups, regions, and countries. Under the rather optimistic assumptions about fertility decline made by the United Nations, numbers of children in all age-groups may start falling by 2010-20. Moreover, because of the combination of recent fertility and mortality trends, a dramatic, although temporary, bulge in child and youth numbers is apparent. In many societies, such as Thailand or Indonesia, there was a "child bulge" in the 1970s, which "aged" into a significant "youth bulge" in the 1980s. The largest-ever global generation of children is to be born in the 1990s.

We are therefore faced with a situation of severe demographic pressure in many countries in the world, especially in cities, and with prospects for rapid rates of growth in the numbers of children and youth for some decades to come. Now is clearly the time for initiating action on behalf of this, and future, generations of children.

Migration

Migration is defined here simply as movements of people from one location to another. It can be from rural into urban areas or between urban areas of similar or different sizes. Rural-to-urban migration is particularly significant when countries are still urbanizing, as is the case for India or Kenya. Frequently, the urban locations to which rural populations migrate are also economically depressed and offer limited opportunities (Preston 1988). Migration can also, as mentioned earlier, become urban-to-rural migration in the very urbanized developed countries.

While the native-born urban, rural, and overall populations show more or less the same demographic structure in terms of age composition and sex ratios, the demographic structure of the urban migrant population is highly selective (in terms of age, sex, and other selected factors), and may vary quite considerably across countries. There are thus distortions in terms of age and sex that are introduced in the urban demographic structure by these migration patterns.

In much of Southeast Asia, urban migrants have tended since the late 1970s to be predominantly young (adolescents or young adults) and single females (Fawcett et al. 1984).

The same is true of Latin America where the shift from a mostly male, to a mostly female, migration occurred earlier, and was already apparent by the 1970s. Throughout South Asia, rural-to-urban migrants are still predominantly young males, both single and married. Similar trends are still being reported for Africa, although there is a significant undercurrent of young women, often with children, starting to move to urban areas.

Migration has potentially important implications for changing gender roles and for a reorganization of the household, with an emphasis on the nuclear family and with considerable distances separating the extended family. Migration challenges the traditional structural and patriarchal ordering of family authority, particularly in India, and in some cases Kenya. It not only affects male/female relationships within the family, but also female/female ones, especially the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in the more emphatically male-centered Indian or Kenyan families, or among sisters in Southeast Asian families. Migration often enhances the position of women within the family, increasing their responsibility towards other family members. Women migrants are given more responsibility within their families. Young girls migrating for work become important family supporters in the Philippines, for example. Subsequent attempts to impose restrictions on them can create the basis for various family disagreements.

Conversely, the male position within the family is often diminished by migration. Male authority is undermined by economic insecurity and the male family member's increasing inability to perform his assigned role as the sole, or at least the main, economic provider. Because of these changing roles, tension is created within the family. At the same time, migration can cause changes in the underlying nature of family association. Family ties (husband-wife, for example) become more emotional and voluntary; the conjugal relationship is emphasized at the expense of the consanguineal tie (Kerckhoff 1972). Earlier family relationships may be undermined, and new family and gender relations reconstructed.

IV. GROWING UP URBAN, POOR AND DEPRIVED

People often hold conflicting views about cities. Cities are identified as modern and technologically-advanced. In Europe as well as elsewhere, they have often represented "civilization", higher learning, knowledge, the media, and the arts. They attract migrants with their glitter and liveliness, and their potential for entertainment. From this perspective, it is

easy to forget that cities are also the breeding grounds for some of the most abject and desolate poverty and deprivation that currently exist.

In the North, there is also a widespread belief that the city and its streets are a place of violence and subversion, where people - and children - will become prey to abuse, drugs, prostitution and crime. The evidence from the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as from Brazil would certainly seem to confirm this impression (Hall 1988). Both positions are, however, extreme and potentially distorting.

World-wide, almost half of the children 0-18 years of age are growing up in cities, and that number is likely to increase in the future.What does it mean to grow up urban? The Urban Child project has analysed comparatively what it has meant to children in the slums and streets of twenty different cities. A general view of the situation of children and young people living in today's cities is presented below.

The Deteriorating Environment

The current rise in urban populations comes with a host of problems, many of which are closely linked to the environment. Pollution of air, water and land as by-products of industrial production has quite likely reached its worst levels yet in both industrialized and developing nations. Pollution in Milan, for example, is severe because of the many automobiles and industries in the area. In the primate city of Bangkok, where virtually all of Thailand's heavy industry is concentrated without appropriately enforced environment regulations (including more than 90 per cent of the country's manufacturers of chemicals, dry cell batteries, paints, medicinal drugs, textiles as well as four out of seven lead smelters), pollution has recently reached unimaginable levels (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989). In Cubatao, an industrial city outside São Paulo, or in Mexico City, many people are severely harmed daily by the dense cloud of toxic smoke that perpetually darkens the city and that is very visible from the surrounding hills.

Environmental damage caused by domestic life is also considerable. Air is polluted by fires used for home heating and cooking. Water is polluted by organic waters from household sewage and by surface run-off of soil and debris from neighbourhood construction activities. According to UNDP estimates, the number of people without adequate water and sanitation is actually increasing. When garbage and industrial wastes are collected, often they are not properly disposed of, and thus add to enormous land fills, the multiplication of

vermin, and further stream and air pollution, including toxic drainage. In Brazil, for example, where less than half of the urban population has its garbage collected, only 3 per cent is properly disposed of; 63 per cent is thrown into streams and rivers; and 34 per cent is left in unprotected open spaces. Much of the time, however, garbage is not collected and runs into streams and rivers, adding toxicity, obstructing water flow, and contributing to flooding.

Transportation activities, mainly resulting from the distance between residence and work place, also contribute to the deterioration of the urban environment in both the North and the South. Transportation causes enormous pressures on the land itself, since approximately 40 per cent of all urban territory may be dedicated to a network of roads. In addition, because of transportation activities, considerable solid waste is generated (including metals, plastics, and rubber) and water damage caused. The major threat, however, is air pollution from exhaust pipes, as industrialized countries have learned - and developing countries are fast discovering. High traffic volumes resulting from inadequate public transportation cause increasing quantities of exhaust pollutants to contaminate the air we breath.

Children are the first to be directly threatened by this environmental degradation. They are more exposed to airborne environmental pollution than adults are because they are usually much more active and because they inhale greater quantities of pollutants relative to their weight. Their body size and work or play activities bring them into greater contact with heavy pollutants, such as lead close to the ground or in the soil itself. Children are also less aware of environmental dangers before the age of 12 years, and therefore developmentally less likely to make a conscious effort to avoid them (Michelson 1984).

Young children playing near their home are constantly exposed to dangers because of traffic, areas which are unsafe for living and play, or areas contaminated with faeces or pollutants. Observers can see children playing, washing themselves, and drinking the polluted waters of Bangkok's canals, or roaming through the uncollected garbage in Nairobi and Manila. In 1987, approximately 25 per cent of solid wastes generated in the city of Bangkok remained uncollected and were dumped mostly onto vacant land or in canals and rivers. According to Hardoy (1990):

"Only 2 per cent of the population is connected to a sewer system; human wastes are generally disposed of through septic tanks and cess pools, and their effluents - as well as waste water from sinks, laundries, baths and kitchens - are discharged into storm water drains and into canals."

Because of their greater vulnerability to pollution, children have a higher occurrence than adults of respiratory diseases leading to death, even in the highly polluted urban areas of such relatively developed countries as Israel (Goren 1989). Infants and children in developing countries are several hundred times more likely to die from diarrhoea, pneumonia and measles, which are common causes of child mortality, than are children in Europe or North America. In 1986, an estimated 14.1 million children under five years of age died; 98 per cent of those deaths were in the developing world (Hardoy et al. 1990).

When they do not die, children living in polluted environments tend to grow up stunted and handicapped under the debilitating effects of continuous exposure to bacteria, micro-organisms and pollutants in their often contaminated living environments, as well as exposure to the many hazards of unregulated urban living. A review of environmental problems in cities in the developing world suggests that the next 20 to 30 years will show that the health impact of pollutants in the human environment - in the air and water and through exposure in the home and work place - has been greatly underestimated (Schofield and White 1984).

Urban overcrowding and density generate compounding problems. Tests in school classrooms in Bangkok showed that noise from traffic, construction and industry reached 76 to 95 decibels (Pathumvanit and Liengcharernsit 1989). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development recommendation is that outdoor noise should not exceed 65 decibels for people's well-being indoors. Research in industrialized countries has similarly shown that high noise levels can have seriously debilitating effects on children. A definite increase in the incidence of cancer and allergy symptoms has also been detected in the urban areas of industrialized countries, due to air pollution from industrial emissions, vehicle exhausts, tobacco smoke and chemicals from building materials combined with poor ventilation. These factors have been connected with the increase in cases of asthma in large cities (Kohler and Jacobsson 1991). While research is less available in the developing world, we should expect these factors to be particularly, and increasingly, prominent there as well.

Many aspects of environmental deterioration affect all the inhabitants of a city. Some, however, are specific to the urban slum and squatter areas. The shortage of water, sewage and sanitation forces parents and their children to use particularly polluted outlets. Overcrowding increases the possibility of the spread of infections and contagious diseases. These problems are usually severely compounded by poverty.

Poverty and Redistribution

In the developing world, poverty is commonly defined as the condition people fall into when their income goes below an absolute poverty line, that is the level considered absolutely necessary for meeting certain minimum nutritional and other needs. This threshold is defined differently in different countries and may change over time. In India, for example, the absolute poverty line is established at the monetary equivalent of 2100 calories per capita per day in urban areas. In Nairobi, by 1981, 55 per cent of all household were categorized as having low or very low incomes per month (Manundu 1991). In urban India in 1987-8, approximately 42 million people, or 20.1 per cent of the total urban population, had incomes falling below the absolute poverty line (Bose 1992).

In the developing world, 1.2 billion people (29.5 per cent of its population) live in absolute poverty and just barely survive. About half of them are urban.

During the last three decades, income-growth disparities have been steadily increasing and redistribution has been worsening across the North-South, rich country-poor country watershed. The wealthiest 20 per cent of the world's population receives on average seven times the income of the poorest 20 per cent. Between 1960 and 1989, the countries with the richest 20 per cent of world population increased their share of global GNP from 70.2 to 82.7 per cent. The countries with the poorest GNP saw their share fall from 2.3 per cent to 1.4 per cent. During 1980-9, the "lost" decade for development, average global growth was higher than during 1965-80, but the developing country share diminished considerably. However measured, the redistribution of resources, already unequal worldwide, has been worsening at alarming rates, particularly in the South (UNDP 1992).

Furthermore, redistribution of resources within developing countries, already very inadequate, is, not surprisingly, continuing to show negative trends. In Brazil, for example, the top 20 per cent of the population receives 26 times the income of the bottom 20 per cent. As a result of urbanization, the urban poor now represent a growing percentage of the global poor. Among them, there are large numbers of homeless and illiterate adults (especially women) and children who do not go to school or who have dropped out of school. A large proportion of Brazilians living in poverty, for example, are children, and in 1989, nearly three fourths (71 per cent) of these impoverished children lived in urban areas (Rizzini et al. 1992). In the industrialized North, redistribution within countries has been affected by recession. In Italy, for example, pockets of extreme poverty still exist in Palermo or Naples, or in the

wealthy northern cities, such as Milan or Turin, which have attracted a large migrant population.

Lack of Appropriate Shelter

There is no guarantee of a solid roof or appropriate shelter for many of the children of the urban poor. Most are likely to live in shabby tenements or makeshift shacks, as documented by Hardoy (1992):

"A recent report published by the Share and Care Apostolate for Poor Shelters (SCAPS) in Manila reveals the quantitative dimensions of the problem. In 1990, Metro Manila had around 8.2 million inhabitants, 654 officially recognized squatter communities and 3.5 million urban poor (54.7 per cent of the population of Metro Manila) who lived crowded into 5.3 per cent of the land of the metropolis. In Quito, according to the 1982 National Population Censuses, there were 144 precarious settlements with 388,995 people, which represented 47.3 per cent of the population of the metropolitan area. Bangkok had over 1,000 slums and squatter settlements when the city population was 5.5 million in 1985. In 13 selected metropolitan areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America, with a total population of 43.8 million people in the early 1970s, it was estimated that 18.1 million lived in squatter settlements, or 41.2 per cent of the aggregate population. As living conditions for the urban poor in developing countries have apparently worsened, it is quite possible 50 per cent or more of the urban population in developing countries, or at least 600 million urban inhabitants, live in "life- and health-threatening" circumstances. It is also likely that 45 per cent of them are children between 0 and 14 years of age."

Overcrowding is widespread in poor communities. In India, more than half of the urban households occupy a single room, with an average occupancy per room of 4.4 persons. More than 50 per cent of Bombay's population lives in slums covering a mere 17 per cent of the total residential area (Gilbert and Gugler 1983).

The situation in smaller cities is also alarming. Quantitatively, they may have only three or four large squatter or urban poor settlements which may appear less crowded and grim than the settlements in larger cities. Their inhabitants, however, face the same problems of uncertain land tenure, decaying buildings and grossly inadequate infrastructures. Many of the habitations were only meant to be makeshift shacks, but have been used for years. Distances often compound the problems. Schools are so inconveniently located and distant in a long-established squatter settlement in Warangal, a city of Andhra Pradesh in India, that children cannot reach them during the monsoon season because of flooded areas. In Kenya, students living in the city of Kisumu risked bad cuts and serious falls if they attempted to

reach their school in the nearby wealthier residential area by crossing a small, foul-smelling river usually full of debris, especially during the rainy season when it swelled.

In general, squatters occupy small proportions of the total urban area, and usually the worst locations, including sites subject to flooding, landslides, high pollution; or sites confining, or even invading, garbage dumps. The households of squatters are often subject to natural disasters (floods and earthquakes, for example), or to man-made ones, such as malicious fire or relocations. Between 1986 and 1990, 19,006 houses were demolished and 27,962 families dislocated in Metro Manila. The Government announced that it planned to demolish 220 poor communities during 1991 because "they are obstructing infrastructural projects" (Porio 1991). Until these communities are demolished, inhabitants live in a climate of uncertainty, anxiety and constant crisis. When families and children are displaced, additional expenses and loss of belongings, familiar surroundings and support systems create new difficulties in their lives.

Working in the Urban Informal Sector

Growing up urban for poor children usually means being closely involved in informal-sector activities both on their own or with their parents. Informal incomes represent over 50 per cent of all incomes in most cities of the developing world. The urban poor, adults and children alike, are engaged in an apparently limitless number of informal activities in order to improve their meager incomes.

In the large city of Chonburi (central Thailand), informal sales of prepared food fed increasing numbers of busy middle-class families of government officials and businessmen, and provided the main or supplemented incomes of almost 60 per cent of the population. These self-employed poor generated a very sizeable amount of capital monthly at city level (Blanc Szanton 1972).

A particularly accurate National Demographic Survey in the Philippines conducted in 1968 on almost 8,000 households nationwide showed that 39 per cent of the urban population 15 to 65 years of age in Metro Manila, and 59 per cent in the secondary cities, worked in the informal sector. Of these informal-sector workers, 81 per cent in the Manila sample and 64 per cent in the secondary city sample were involved in tertiary-sector activities, such as personal and distributive services (vendors, housemaids, barbers, and so forth), rather than transformative or extractive ones (Koo and Smith 1983).

These economic activities are particularly important for women and for migrants. Approximately half of the recent migrants in Metro Manila (defined as those who have been in the city seven years or less) worked in the informal sector, compared with 33 per cent of the native-born. In secondary Philippine cities, the proportion was 64 per cent of recent migrants, compared with 39 per cent of the native-born. Informal-sector workers were also predominantly female (61 per cent). Activities in the informal sector offer migrants their first earning possibilities; and if they are female urban residents, they are likely to continue to work in the informal sector, mostly as vendors (ibid.). Children often help their mothers to prepare and sell food items, and are thus introduced to the trade (Blanc Szanton 1972).

In Africa, the informal sector represents a very considerable proportion of urban activities. Nairobi was, as early as 1971, characterized as a "self-help" city because, as a result of its rapidly expanding and under-serviced population, one third of all people in the city lived in unauthorized housing and 30,000 jobs were not officially counted (ILO 1972). This self-help economy created more jobs, absorbed more people, and expanded faster than the so-called "modern" economy of the city (Hake 1977). The creativity, but also the problems, of that sector are powerfully illustrated in the case study of the *matatu* mode of public transportation in Nairobi, composed of privately-owned vehicles that effectively service the poor, but are constantly harassed by the municipal administration (Lee-Smith 1989).

In India, although child labour in the formal sector of industry has been virtually eliminated, children continue to work in the informal sector, often encouraged by their parents. The typical child worker comes from a poor and numerous family, and has usually dropped out of school early. Boys work in cottage industries, characterized by non-mechanized, labour-intensive operations, and working conditions which are often hazardous and exploitative. Others are self-employed, selling newspapers, picking scrap or waste material; or apprentices in carpet making or embroidery trades; or, in rare cases, even bonded workers. Girls move in a more protected and restricted environment than boys do. They normally work in their homes, or in all-female units of the weaving and match-making industries, and their wages are consistently lower than those of their male counterparts (Bose 1992).

The important contribution informal-sector activities represent in the economy of the city are rarely recognized by city administrators and planners. The resourcefulness of the urban poor is usually unsupported and often causes them to come into conflict with the law. Children especially are not protected from exploitation by employers.

New Deprivations

Some of the most commonly-used indicators for human deprivation are lack of access to health services, safe water, adequate sanitation, and other services. In the developing world, poor health due to inadequate nutrition, the lack of safe spaces for children's play activities, the monotonous life of many squatter settlements represent other severe deprivations for the urban poor.

However, deprivation also represents all of the other more qualitative, and at times subjective, dimensions of wants, lacks and deficiencies experienced by children and their parents. New deprivations include the recurrent lack of human concerns in the planning of multi-storied tenements on the outskirts of cities both North and South, the loneliness of a child in Milan watching television alone in an empty flat, or the secluded existence within their courtyards, away from even media exposure, of the young girls in India. Deprivations also encompass newly-created wants as consumers and the related frustrations of those who cannot afford to satisfy these wants, but who see the object of their want in other people's hands.

There is growing evidence of sweeping new deprivations both North and South. Still only partially analysed, these deprivations seem to be affecting children at many stages of their survival and development, and in significant ways. Deprivations become particularly serious when compounded by poverty and economic constraints. They require a complex analysis. Country Teams have found connections, for example, between these new deprivations and the emergence of street children.

Some general areas of concern have become apparent in the study's comparative analysis. New deprivations tend to fall under at least five main headings:

(1) *A diminishing fabric of social support for children within the family and community.* In developing countries, there is strong evidence of a decrease in the support of the extended family (grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins). In some cases, for example in Africa where communities are an important component of social organization, the failure of support systems extends to the whole community.

In the North, the extended family has already lost much of its importance as a system of daily emotional and physical support, and the nuclear family itself is showing clear signs of disintegration. Relationships between men and women have become "more fragile, tentative, and insecure" (Bradshaw 1990). There are, in other words, deep changes in gender

roles and relationships that affect the child's immediate environment and introduce into marital relationships, for instance, the potential for discussion, dissension, and, ultimately, divorce. New types of households are widespread, especially female-headed households which tend to fall into poverty, either temporarily or persistently. The children of these households manifest a whole range of problems, including low educational achievement and a higher incidence of adolescent parenthood. Many of these problems are cyclical, with adolescents following patterns established by their parents (McLanahan 1988).

According to analysts in the United States, only about 25 per cent of children's problems are, in fact, clearly attributable to family income (Danziger and Stern 1990). Recent explanations have also emphasized problems of self-esteem, and the need for meaningful relationships as a form of adolescent self-validation (Musick 1992). Therefore, financial support seems to be less important an element than the development of emotional connections that give children a sense of security and self-worth (Collins 1991, Lerner 1991). Changed family situations tend to diminish the availability of caring adults appropriate to the task.

In the South, gender roles are also changing, and even though this may not lead to divorce among urban poor in India or the Philippines, it does, especially when combined with the pressures of urban poverty, cause many *de facto* marital separations and break-ups. The Country Teams in the Philippines, Kenya and Brazil, and to a lesser extent India, found clear evidence of an increase in female-headed households.

(2) *Decreasing opportunities for socialization.* Interacting with other children and adults is an important requirement of growing up and finding one's adult position in the world. In the North, with the increase of households in which two adults work, there are growing numbers of latch-key children. Moreover, because family sizes are declining, many are "only" children and have no siblings with whom to interact. The school often does not offer effective alternatives to the long hours spent in solitude. A recent study found, for example, that socio-relational problems accounted for up to 30 per cent of the problems mentioned by children 6-14 years of age in Ferrara, a city in northern Italy (Polletta 1991, Solito 1992). In developing countries, the problems are more often related to the absenteeism of overburdened working parents and the lack of formal provision of open spaces and facilities that will promote safe peer interactions within children's own communities (Hart 1992, Hughes 1990).

(3) *Lack of opportunities to consolidate one's self-worth in the broader societal sphere.* This category relates to issues of wants and opportunities. Media is not available to all: not, for

example, to some extremely poor children who live in makeshift shanties on the outskirts of New Delhi. The desire for new consumer goods is being created by road advertisements and by people's curiosity. Having consumer goods becomes particularly important as a symbol of social value for adolescents, especially if they are marginalized. When they cannot afford to have this symbol, both they and their overworked parents may become extremely frustrated (Jelin 1989). In the research carried out in Brazil by FLACSO, the desire to consume, as well as the need for affection and companionship, were found to be two factors "pulling" adolescents towards street bands (Rizzini et al 1992).

(4) *Experiences of marginalization and uncertainty of the future.* A feeling of not belonging in the present and a fear of what the future will bring are two root causes of urban stress. Children of immigrants in the North are vulnerable to this kind of stress, especially when their legal situation has not been regularized. In the South, the recurrent daily crises in the lives of the urban poor compound the situation. A major factor is often the inability of individuals, families and communities to control the very events which determine their lives (Duhl 1990); medical doctors and psychiatrists are increasingly recognizing the negative effects of that lack of control (Levi 1989, WHO 1992, Satterthwaite 1992).

(5) *Poorly-planned urban environment.* Urban stress is often due to a lack of social concern in city planning. A poor physical environment can inhibit or damage children's physical and mental development. It may also limit their ability to satisfy their need for social interaction, consistency and predictability in the care-giving environment. Children also need a physical environment which is safe from accidents or infection and thus suitable for exploring and discovering (Myers and Hertenberg 1987). The children of construction workers in India who are left to roam around the construction site while both parents work, and are thus highly prone to accidents and infection, are a good case in point. The desolate childhood settings of the poorly-built suburban section of Milan or Naples provide other powerful examples of the effects of poor urban planning on children (Solito 1992).

Methodologically, urban stress is due to a complex and dynamic interrelationship of variables:

- *Physical and psychosocial stimuli*, such as high density (within households, within shared facilities, within neighbourhoods), pollution and overcrowding, unhealthy housing, lack of user-friendly public spaces, limited amount and quality of adult-child and child-child interactions, and the breakdown of familial cooperation are elements which are dynamically interrelated, and in turn interact with:

- *an individual's psychobiological programme* which includes vulnerability, resistance and certain predispositions related to genetic factors, as well as current and past environmental structures and processes. This interaction, combined with other environmental influences, may set in motion:

- *mechanisms of pathogenic processes*, such as social differentiation, segmentalization, marginalization, segregation, spatial diffusion, child abuse. These mechanisms, in turn, become possible:

- *precursors of disease or discomfort*, such as truancy, substance use, petty juvenile crime, and may then lead to:

- *impaired quality of life*, evidenced by substance abuse, serious crimes, child morbidity (such as obesity, anorexia), child mortality (from accidents or suicide, for example), or inadequate child development conducive to problems in later life (Eckblad 1992).

Problems can be documented, and have been particularly well substantiated in industrialized countries, but the mechanisms of pathogenic effects can often only be guessed at because they are much less researched and subject to many specific considerations. One can only surmise from the growing size of the problems that the effects are considerable indeed.

Warning Signals

Urban children in every part of the world experience difficulties because cities are generally not built with their "healthy, happy growth and development" in mind. In developing countries, many urban children and families bear the additional burden of absolute poverty, insecurity of tenure, poor or non-existing urban infrastructure, and inadequate and diminishing social, educational and health services. This burden has increased during the 1980s in almost all countries, but is particularly evident in Kenya and other sub-Saharan African countries because of sharply-decreasing development, and in countries faced with high levels of debt and thus with severe structural adjustment constraints, such as Brazil and the Philippines.

In urban environments in the North, old pockets of poverty persist and new deprivations have arisen. Children and their families are now experiencing the constraints resulting from a long period of recession which has eroded important elements of what have

long been considered advanced systems for social assistance, health and education. Beyond that, the industrialized countries are also witnessing deep-rooted social changes, which, in extreme forms, are manifested by exasperated individualism and the loss of family support systems. National identities are also in crisis as Western Europe approaches unification, and all major industrialized countries experience transnational migration from the South. Individuals are faced with the progressive disappearance of important points of reference in their daily lives. Italy, a newly-industrialized country, exemplifies these trends very clearly. Because of ageing populations, children have not been given adequate attention and concern at the societal and policy level.

Media images create a plastic world of mirages and illusions around children and, at the same time, subject them to reality at its crudest. Time and space are telescoped, world events are captured by a reporter's camera and projected into their very living rooms. Children see wars and killings. They hear reports of atrocities, crime and corruption. They see evidence of soaring rates of substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, volatile substances), suicide and despair, runaways, street children and youth violence. These are indeed the events that journalists are eager to sensationalize. By highlighting the more negative aspects and focusing on extreme cases, the media often compounds the problems. It misses the opportunity to analyse deep-rooted causes. Instead of encouraging positive action, much media reporting fosters discouragement and negative attitudes.

In both the North and South, there has been a noticeable increase over the last two decades in the presence of children in both difficult, and especially difficult, circumstances. Their growing numbers and the extent of the deprivations they experience in the urban environment are often very striking. Their presence is a warning signal of severe problems and of the deep-seated social uneasiness.

IV. THE FIVE COUNTRY STUDIES

Some Issues Defined

1. *Childhood*. The definition of what constitutes "childhood", and thus "children" as a category, raises some important issues. As Country Teams emphasized, these definitions have been rapidly changing. In the North, childhood became a more clearly conscious construct

in the early years of this century after the first phases of industrialization. While young children were previously subjected to the rigours of hard manual labour, with the rise of the middle class, a more clearly defined time span was dedicated to the process of growing up and being educated. Childhood has been codified and extensively discussed throughout the century (Zelizer 1985).

In the developing world, this shift has only partially occurred and the construct is not as consciously a part of prevailing attitudes. "Childhood" is very short for impoverished urban children forced to work to help sustain themselves and their families. Adult responsibilities are thrust upon these children while they are still young and no time is allotted to them just to "grow up" or prepare themselves for a better future. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable. They may shift from being surrogate mothers to their siblings (while their mother is out earning a living) to becoming very young mothers themselves, thus never "acquiring the vitally important skills and knowledge [they] need to succeed themselves, and to ensure the adequate development of the children in [their] care" (Musick 1992).

In the project, children have been defined as being between 0 and 18 years of age. This definition includes adolescents under the category of "children", and thus further expands the usual definition of childhood, both North and South. At the same time, the project has highlighted, when necessary, the importance of understanding the responses of children and families in relationship to different age-groups and genders.

2. *Families, households and single-headed families.* The term "family" is used broadly by Country Teams to include both the nuclear (husband, wife, children), and the extended (husband, wife, children with parents, siblings or other more distant family members), family. It refers to the bonds of recognized social relationships that exist among people who do not necessarily physically reside together. The term "household", on the other hand, refers very specifically to people, whether related or not, who live together under the same roof. For example, parents and their married sons or daughters may maintain separate households while still being a family.

This distinction between "family" and "household", which is rarely made in development literature on children, is important sociologically because it allows us to identify ongoing aspects of change that directly affect children. Extended family linkages have often dissolved with industrialization, urbanization and development, leaving children without the

emotional and physical support of grandparents, or uncles and aunts, and thus too exclusively and uniquely dependent on the care of their often overburdened parents.

The concept of female-headed households has emerged from attempts to identify broad categories of women (and children) who are especially disadvantaged. The United Nations has recommended that countries use either "head of household" or "reference person" to determine relationships within households. Aggregate numbers of female-headed households are thus increasingly quoted to prove family deterioration and diminished support systems for certain women and their children. These aggregate numbers, usually based on national censuses or household surveys, are certainly broadly indicative of ongoing family changes.

A crude comparison of census data suggests that the overall female headship rates are higher in European regions than in Southeastern Asia. The rates are lower in southern Europe (including Italy) than in northern Europe. The Caribbean as well as Norway have very high rates. In Japan, the rate is very low. However, the female headship phenomenon (as officially defined in censuses) is socially diverse both within and across countries. The determinants of headship and its significance also vary. The position of such households may vary substantially across countries with similar rates of female headship, and vice versa. The actual consequences for both women and their children may similarly be quite varied and require further qualification. The report of a three-year project undertaken by the New York-based Population Council and the International Center for Research on Women (1989) in Washington discusses the problems involved in the definition of female-headed households, and presents evidence of the prevalence of such family forms, the severity of their circumstances, and the duration of women's tenure as heads of households. Possible impacts on the next generation are also considered.

The concept of a female-headed household has been widely used in the country studies. The Country Teams were, however, challenged to provide careful definitions of the term "female-headed household" as used in that country as well as qualitative explanations about the kinds of household relationships and circumstances that the term generated. They were asked to clarify if the term was used in their country as: a) a census reference person; b) the household's chief decision maker; c) the household's chief economic provider; d) the person who is entitled to claim certain benefits, such as land or membership in a cooperative on behalf of the household; or e) the person whose characteristics provide the best indication of the status of the household as a whole. In their own analyses, the operational definition

used was "households where women are the sole or primary breadwinner". The number of women who pass through a phase of their lives when they are the sole or primary support of young children and the relative length of that phase, were also examined whenever possible (Bruce 1989).

In the Philippines, the concept of a head of household is related to seniority: the head of a household is normally an older male or female relative who happens to live in that household, but is not necessarily, or even normally, its main provider. In Brazil, households legally defined as single-headed may actually have a succession of adult males present over the years, as common-law marriages are made and subsequently fall apart, often after many years. The effects on the children present would obviously be quite different in Brazil than in the Philippines. In India, the remarriage of impoverished widows or abandoned women with children to elderly men in their communities in order to avoid the social stigma of not having a husband again provides a distorted image of both adult presences and absences, levels of support offered and the *de facto* incidence of the problem. As far as possible, Country Teams based definitions qualitatively on a child-related model that examined the presence or absence of a "husband" and thus potential "father" figure and provider for the children, irrespective of current definitions of "heads of households" and the formality of the "marriage" link, whether *de jure* (legal marriage) or *de facto* (common law marriage or union).

3. *Coping strategies of children, families and households.* An important element of the study from its onset has been the need to gain a better understanding of the survival strategies adopted by urban children and their families under stress in order to: a) identify their sources of strength and thus be able to devise better support systems for them; and b) recognize their resilience and creativity so as to offset existing misconceptions about their ability to confront problems and manage their own lives. This was achieved through survey methodologies, participant observation, and the documentation of specific cases of success as well as failure. Different kinds of coping strategies by types of families and households were identified in each Country Team, and their implications outlined and discussed comparatively across countries with the aim of formulating specific recommendations for action.

The process involved recording the particulars of the daily lives of children who were "coping" in urban environments, and analysing the "coping" strategies of their parents. Poor urban households in all five countries are engaged in a desperate struggle to survive, despite negative impacts from all sides. The poor have increased the number of hours they work,

explored new niches in the informal sector, tried to use to the utmost all of their available resources. When desperate, Kenyan women brew illegal beer, risk six months in prison to sell vegetables on the street or engage in prostitution, often conditioning their young daughters to do the same (Onyango et al. 1992).

Households supported by women in the Indian slums or in poor neighborhoods of the Philippines have managed to find outside paid work for their children or rely on them for domestic help within the family. If possible, some children are sent to school, depending on their abilities, age and sex. Decisions are pragmatic and reasonable, but they require maximizing meager resources and at times end by sacrificing certain children on behalf of the others. Children with a "good head for studying" would be encouraged and funds provided to them, because there is the hope that, with education, they could "make it" and later help their parents and other siblings. Girls in the Philippines have better school achievement rates than boys do (but often less successful career rates). However, because they are considered to be more reliable, they are often required by their parents to drop out of school; they do tend to give a larger percentage of their earnings back to the family than boys do. Young girls in impoverished urban families in India are generally not sent to school. In Kenya, many girls are pulled out of school to be married.

Strategies are only as successful as the family's ability to learn how to deal with the police, teachers, school administrators, medical and emergency personnel, and other representatives of the municipal institutions which impinge upon their lives.

4. *Communities and neighbourhoods.* The use of the terms "urban communities" and "neighbourhoods" has been particularly confusing in the development literature, especially since both terms seem to imply the existence of special relationships linking neighbours without submitting this assumption to the test. Country Teams use both terms simply to denote "a population living within a particular geographical area". The extent of its social closeness, quality of relationships, level of mobilization and support systems, and potential for unified action are ascertained on a case-by-case basis rather than assumed.

A qualitative assessment of communities is therefore important, but difficult. How do we measure the indifference and apathy of the inhabitants of a squatter settlement unless we understand their attitudes as, perhaps, a show of resistance to outside influences they do not understand and to outside manipulation? How do we evaluate the sense of frustration and the occasional aggressiveness of many inhabitants in a squatter settlement unless we

understand the history of the settlement and its people, possibly evicted by force from a different settlement because the authorities - often appointed rather than elected - have decided to build a new highway or to "clean" the city for foreign dignitaries and international celebrations. The history of a poor settlement and of its people is very helpful in planning assistance that engages the community itself and its organizations (Hardoy and Hardoy 1991).

Detailed histories of how cities were built and managed during the last decades are important, especially if they are undertaken by districts as well as for the whole city, because they can provide us with trends on land use, industrial locations, transportation systems, development of infrastructure, location and availability of urban services, new housing (both public or private), informal investments, and so on, in relation to changes in the distribution of the population, its age structure, sex, origin, incomes and sources of income over time. Each city is built and rebuilt daily through a multiplicity of decisions and investments - most of them small and made by families - which are often poorly understood. Laws, norms and standards, which often partially determine the future of the city and its inhabitants, are generally sanctioned on the basis of a fragmented and poorly informed view of the city, with data that is too aggregated to be useful, and without consulting the different segments of the population about their views. Because all human activities taking place in one city are interconnected, the problems of the modern city in both the developing and the industrialized world cannot be addressed exclusively from a sectoral perspective as is the tendency in the urban development field. Urban change can only be brought about if the city is viewed holistically.

5. *Children in especially difficult circumstances.* Within UNICEF, the term "children in especially difficult circumstances" has been defined as "working children, street children, abused, neglected and abandoned children, children in armed conflict and disaster":

- *Working children* are those children whose work, whether part or full time, paid or unpaid, within or outside the family group, is exploitative and damaging to their health and/or development. "Children should be protected from hazardous work, such as mining and quarrying; from inappropriate work, such as lifting heavy weights; from excessive hours of work; from work which may stunt their growth; and from work in harmful environments...[They should be] provided with an environment that fosters their healthy, happy growth and development" (UNICEF 1986).

- *Street children* is a category of children whose definition is still problematic and in the process of being clarified. It referred initially to all urban children who spent most of their time on the streets, whether working or not. It is progressively being applied to those children on the streets who have tenuous ties, or no ties at all, with their families, and who have developed specific survival strategies. Research on those children by academics and NGOs, including the research sponsored by this first UNICEF Urban Child project, has contributed to clarifying the importance, from the point of view of programmes, of existing - or absent - ties with the family of origin. It has also made efforts to define the extent to which conditions on the streets expose children to specific risks, such as use and abuse of dangerous substances, involvement in the production, processing and trafficking of drugs, exploitative work, sexual exploitation, discrimination, mistreatment, and violence.

- *Children endangered by abuse and neglect* are those children who are, occasionally or habitually, victims of physical, sexual or emotional violence that is preventable and originates from their immediate environment (ibid.). Child abandonment is considered a most damaging form of child abuse and neglect. It is recognized that there are degrees of child abuse and neglect, and that this is, in significant ways, a relative and subjective category which has been researched only to a limited extent in developing countries. It is also recognized increasingly that abuse and neglect may be inflicted not only from within the family, but also from outside the family group, in some cases directly by the State or by broader societal conditions and ongoing trends. Abuses within state-run institutions in Rumania and Brazil have recently been examined, and are disturbing examples of abuse inflicted by society (Himes et al. 1990, Rizzini et al. 1992). As the Country Teams point out in their studies, institutional abuse exists in varying degrees in all of the countries examined. Both family and societal abuse and neglect are complex issues calling for decisive North/South action.

- *Children in situations of armed conflict* is a growing category of children involved either indirectly as victims, or directly as combatants, in war, civil strife and violence.

- *Children affected by natural disasters* are children who experience physical loss or damage, social and/or economic disruption, either by high-impact disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, or by slow-onset events, such as droughts and severe ecological degradation.

These categories are not mutually exclusive. Both street and working children may often also be abused and neglected. Many children in situations of armed conflict or affected by natural disasters become street and working children. All have been "abandoned" in some way. However, the concept of abandonment contains a potential indictment of the family, while very often it is the state and society that have abandoned both the children and their families. Abandonment therefore needs to be explained in terms of broader causalities. Similarly, many of the problems contributing to the children's especially difficult circumstances need to be qualified before a real qualitative understanding of these children's predicaments can be reached, and broader and more far-reaching strategies devised.

A Comparative Assessment of Situations

1. *The focus of the studies.* In order to address the main elements that represent "disadvantage", or better "especially difficult circumstances" for urban children, the Country Teams decided to focus, as mentioned earlier, on street and working children who are found on the streets or in the poor sections of the twenty cities selected. Children in institutions were added in the case of Kenya and Brazil. The focus of the study has been reflexive and qualitative and includes:

A. An analysis of the situation of urban children in the five countries, including an investigation of:
   (a) the types of problems that street or "slum" living creates for urban children, and the children's daily coping strategies;
   (b) the types of families and neighbourhoods generating urban children with problems;
   (c) the broader political, social and economic contexts that affect urban children and contribute to their situation of relative disadvantage.

B. An assessment in the five countries of:
   (a) policies affecting urban children at the municipal and national levels;
   (b) programmes specific to urban children, such as street-based, community-based, and institution-based programmes; and

(c) municipal processes of mobilization on behalf of urban children.

The analysis of situations takes advantage of available secondary data as well as of the results of primary research conducted among children and their parents. Because secondary data are not evenly available, the Country Teams have carefully selected, in many cities, samples of children and their parents to be interviewed as well as sub-samples that have been submitted to more intensive participant observation and from whom life histories have been collected. The intention has been to identify the types of disadvantage that are most frequent, assess the coping strategies and resilience of children and families, and analyse the processes that cause some disadvantaged children to encounter situations of even-greater disadvantage. A multi-method approach was adopted in order to "triangulate" on the phenomenon and "increase empirical and conceptual accountability" (Fielding and Fielding 1986, Kidder 1981). The qualitative dimensions introduced by the life histories allow Country Teams to identify recurrent processes and approximate causal relationships, thus helping to validate and interpret survey data, decipher puzzling responses and offer case study illustrations (Sieber 1979). They facilitate the identification of different levels of causality.

The multi-method approach has also included a participation dimension which has aimed to give space to the children's own subjectivities and voices, or, in other words, to make children subjects rather than objects. Following the advice of two external experts (Roger Hart, Professor of Environmental Psychology, City University of New York, and Ray Lorenzo, Urban Planner, Perugia, Italy), Country Teams utilized participatory research techniques to elicit rich and meaningful answers from the children themselves. This involved placing children in play situations that would help draw out information in less structured and intimidating ways than by survey or interview which are not appropriate for use with young children, or even adolescents. These techniques have ensured the greater authenticity of the answers. Children, and in particular children in especially difficult circumstances who have been emotionally scarred and exposed to exploitative adults, tend to be defensive and conceal the truth about their own families and personal histories. Establishing trust has thus been a very important first step, one which has also had therapeutic effects: by just telling their stories and being listened to by someone who is genuinely interested in them, the children have gained new self-esteem.

The assessment of programmes and the documentation of processes of national and municipal mobilization for children has also been carried out through a multi-method approach which has included the analysis of existing reports and evaluations, and interviews of key participants and programme initiators.

Some of the questions that the Country Teams have asked themselves or others (with some variations across countries) are the following:

- Who are the disadvantaged children of our city? What seems to be the origin of their problems (for instance, in the family, at school, on the streets, among peers, and so forth)? How many are they? How are they distributed? Where are they located in the city (communities, ethnic origins if relevant, migration patterns)?

- How do they utilize the city (types of activities, forms of work, conditions of work, peer group relations, play activities) and what kinds of problems do they encounter in their daily interaction (with police, schools, teachers, among others) or in their interaction at home (with parents, siblings, other relatives, neighbours, and so forth)?

- How do their problems relate to other problems in our city, especially urban poverty, new deprivations, abuse, drugs, crime, institutions (schools, health centres), management, and tourism? How do their problems relate to broader trends, including industrialization and development patterns, family change, social change, urbanization, migration, global economy, structural adjustment, transnationalism?

- Why do we want to know? It is important that the Country Teams analyse the reason they need certain information. This will help them clarify their own definition of the problems.

- How do disadvantaged children perceive themselves and their future? How do they perceive the adults around them (such as father, mother, teacher, police, social worker, street educator, municipal administrator)? Do they view them as threatening, or as positive or negative influences? Do they see themselves as victims, or as more grown up than their parents?

- How do parents, teachers, street educators, social workers, police, city managers and administrators view the difficulties their children or other children face? How do they evaluate strategies to cope with these difficulties, including those offered by the city or by NGOs or the private sector? How do they perceive disadvantaged urban children, their families and their communities? Under a specific label or social category, such as child, youth, adult, boy or girl, drug addict, worker, squatter, poor? With what characteristics, for

example, delinquent, expendable, irresponsible? Are they viewed as positive presences or as liabilities?

- What do they see themselves doing? What have they done for children recently? Are they part of the problem or part of the solution? What are their limitations? What are their strengths, abilities and commitments?

- Which level of causes can they attack and how? How would they define their current and future goals?

- With whom should they work? Whom should they consider allies? Whom should they win over?

- What have we learned so far through our own or other people's experience?

- What would we like to see happening in the future?

The answers Country Teams have both given and received are not necessarily comprehensive, but have provided insights into the children's and family's relationships and coping strategies. These heightened perceptions have, in turn, helped to shape programme models, future programme directions, and mobilization strategies at the municipal and national level.

As acknowledged in UNICEF Board documents, and as Country Teams rapidly discovered during the first reviews of literature, there are generally limited statistical data on CEDC. Children in especially difficult circumstances are, in fact, an often elusive population: moving about streets or secluded in enclosed courtyards, they are difficult to find and difficult to count. They are often defensive and resist being interviewed. It is usually problematic to relate the children interviewed with an actual family, and most existing family or household studies do not contain information about children. The little existing quantitative information on the subject is based on limited research and on NGO estimates which are rarely reliable, systematic, or methodologically sound. Definitions and terminologies are not standardized. Furthermore, sociological research has not developed international standards to the same degree that the disciplines of demography or economics have. Definitions about different forms of abuse, for example, are often culturally relative. This makes global estimates and cross-cultural comparisons particularly difficult to obtain.

The Country Teams resolved, after a first survey of the existing national literature, to produce more detailed primary studies (interviews and life histories) of the conditions of children in especially difficult circumstances in urban areas in order to: (a) clarify and

standardize the categories of especially difficult circumstances across different cultures; (b) connect the children with family situations; and (c) clarify some of the paths that lead from difficult to especially difficult circumstances, in order to propose more preventive urban policy approaches.

The initial focus and sampling strategy for this first study varied from country to country. The Country Teams in Philippines and Brazil focused specifically on street and working children, whom they interviewed in their most frequent place of work, the streets, but explored in the process their connection to poor urban neighbourhoods and talked with their families. The Country Teams in India and Italy approached the task inversely, focusing on children and families in poor urban neighbourhoods, but uncovering in the process other categories of children in difficult, or especially, difficult circumstances, including many street and working children. In Kenya, where urban problems are relatively more recent, but rapidly increasing, the Country Team focused on poor urban communities in three growing cities, and on children in homes and correctional institutions. A major national study on street children, carried out by one of the team members from UNICEF Nairobi on behalf of the Ford Foundation, allowed the Country Team to complete the picture from the point of view of street children.

2. *A greater understanding of "street children"*. Street children, a major CEDC category, are basically an urban phenomenon. By analysing the situation of these seemingly faceless and ubiquitous children and their relations to their families, the Country Teams have established that only a small number have actually severed all ties with their families. Most still live at home and contribute to the household economy by their informal-sector work activities. Samples taken by Country Teams in different cities reveal that approximately three fourths of the children on the streets are actively contributing to household economies in the Philippines and in India. In Brazil, where original research was undertaken in Goiânia, it was found that even among street children who had only tenuous ties with their families, 42 per cent still sometimes contributed to the family budget. The majority of children live in poor urban neighbourhoods. School attendance varied by country and depended largely on the extent to which children or their parents believe that education can be useful. School hours and fees are also decisive factors.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are street children who have no functional family ties at all and attempt to fill this void by forming "fictive family" relationships, and

even a strong emotional attachment to the "street". These children are usually completely "on their own", and although they may find some peer support, they face stark realities day after day, and are hemmed in by exploitative older children and adults. They also are likely to be affected by institutional violence, including, in some cases, police brutality and the harshness of juvenile courts. These children generally constitute a small portion of the overall number of children on the street. Even in large Brazilian cities where the phenomenon has attracted large media attention, the total numbers in each city range from a few hundred to, at most, a few thousand (Blanc 1991, Rizzini et al. 1992).

3. *New views about working children.* During the analysis of the lives of children in poor urban communities, Country Teams have become aware of the many different categories of working children. Children who work in the informal sector sell special items in small quantities (such as newspapers, cigarettes, flowers, food, even drugs), or special services (such as shoe-polishing, car-watching, car-washing, luggage-carrying). They work on streets, and in markets, bus depots or railway stations where there are large numbers of customers. The children can also be found in front of hotels, restaurants or tourist spots. They depend on consignments, work for occasional employers, or are fully self-employed. Children who do not go to the streets, also work, sometimes with adults, as scavengers on garbage dumps, picking rags or selling plastic bags. Because of their activities, these children are often dirty and are thus especially discriminated against. Other children work in establishments as part-time domestic helpers, hotel boys or shopkeeper's helpers. Others in semi-skilled jobs as mechanics or ironsmiths. Still others work at home with their parents or neighbours at local cottage industries (bangle-makers, prepared foods, drug production).

Country Teams have analysed these categories on the basis of the life histories and surveys collected, as well as secondary data in order to clarify the different degrees of exploitative work being undertaken by these children. The number of hours on the job and the relationship with employers, consignment agents or family members were considered. Attempts were not made to be comprehensive, but rather generative by illustrating in depth the different categories encountered. Information was provided on how work can range from constructive, resilient, ego-building activities that make children feel less marginalized (especially when combined with regular schooling) to extremely exploitative conditions.

An important conceptual distinction must be made. There are categories of urban children in especially difficult circumstances who are: (1) particularly visible, such as street children and children working on the street, including child prostitutes; (2) children who are away from the public eye (working in poor urban neighbourhoods, on garbage dumps, or in a secluded place manufacturing drugs), whose problems are publicly recognized but less visible; and most importantly, (3) children whose problems have not been fully recognized, such as the "invisible" girl child in the poor urban settlements of Indian cities, or the adolescent common-law wife and mother in the Philippines, and who have only few advocates speaking for them, usually among NGOs. Because of the different levels of awareness of the problems, these different categories require somewhat different programmatic approaches.

4. *A broader view of children in difficult circumstances.* The studies have allowed us to identify other categories of at-risk children that could either be considered separately or be subsumed into existing categories. These include:

- *Users and abusers of dangerous substances* which include drugs, but also in many developing countries chemical inhalants of different sorts which are often extremely destructive, such as solvents, adhesives and fuel gases, local drugs (*miraa* in Kenya, for example), or even excessive alcohol and tobacco (a major problem of youth in the United States and in parts of Europe). The studies reported that 75 per cent of street children in Brazil, and increasing numbers of street and poor urban children in the Philippines and Kenya, are abusing dangerous substances (Alexander et. al 1992).

- *Children and adolescents that enter into conflict with the law*, and who are handled, and often mishandled, by the punitive arm of the state (police, courts, and the penal system) that is involved in defining their crime and applying punishment. Abuses and injustice have been identified by all Country Teams, although the severity of the problem and the numbers involved vary.

- *Adolescent mothers.* Adolescent mothering is not a new phenomenon. It was actually the norm for centuries in every part of the world. The number of girls involved is exceedingly high in India, where the problem increases under the pressure of poverty as the country develops economically, rather than diminishes. Adolescent mothering is surprisingly frequent, but generally unrecognized, as a problem in the prevalently Catholic Philippines. According to the 1988 National Demographic Survey, 42.5 per cent of the ever-married

women were already married at age 15 to 19 years. Data collected in 1981 also show early marriage trends. About 30 per cent of marriages involved adolescent brides (28 per cent between the ages of 15 and 19 years, 2 per cent under 15 years of age). Live births from adolescent mothers steadily increased during the 1980-7 period from 122,265 to 128,147. Early marriages are often precipitated by an unplanned pregnancy resulting from premarital sex practices. Maternal mortality rates were highest in the under-15 age-group, with a reported rate of 637.2 per 1000 live births in 1988 (Corpuz 1992).

There has also been a rapid increase in adolescent mothering in Kenya, where this phenomenon is considered a major problem in both urban and rural areas. It is estimated that pregnancy forced over 8,000 girls to leave school in 1987, 13,000 in 1986, and 9,000 in 1985 (Kenya Ministry of Health 1988). These young girls represented about 1 per cent of the overall female school population in 1987. From a sample of 90 schools, overall drop-out rates per 1000 girls between 1985 and 1988 ranged from 8.7 to 12.3 per cent. Those rates increased during that period for girls in day schools and mixed schools, while they remained unchanged in boarding schools (catering to relatively better-off families). They had reached a rate of 25 per 1000 girls by 1988 among students of *harambee* or informal secondary schools located in poor urban and rural areas.

- *Sexually-exploited girls*. These girls represent "a modern form of slavery" which has grown to be a considerable problem world-wide. In this type of exploitation, the victims are children and adolescents who are not in a position to defend their most basic human rights. "It is primarily the most defenseless individuals in the community, those with the greatest need for support and care, who are exploited by the sex market" (Naversen 1989). Some of the main factors that have contributed to creating conditions favourable to children's sexual exploitation in the South are, according to Naversen, rapid urbanization, the "colonial legacy", a widespread "machismo", foreign military bases, and international trade and tourism. Rapid urbanization and the increasing number of female-supported urban households certainly seemed to be a major cause of the relatively small, but rising, problem of female and girl-child prostitution in our research in urban Kenya. Naversen also estimated that between 300,000 and 400,000 children engaged in prostitution in India, out of approximately 2,000,000 people involved altogether. The study also quoted a total of 5,000,000 women engaged in prostitution in Brazil, but did not provide estimates for children in either Brazil or the Philippines.

- *Children and AIDS* is an increasing problem in the poor urban areas of the cities under study, especially in Kenya and Brazil. There are 6 million cases of HIV infection in Africa, over 50 per cent among women, and the numbers are rapidly increasing in other regions. The numbers of orphans and "damaged childhoods" are rapidly increasing. AIDS orphans are being dispersed among members of the extended family living in rural areas, whose resources, however, are severely overstretched. In urban areas, the support of the extended family is much less available. Potential foster parents are afraid of being infected. Elderly relatives, such as grandparents, are often unable to deal with the situation. It has been estimated that in the ten worst-affected African countries, between 3 and 5.5 million children will be orphaned by AIDS in 2000 (Black 1991).

- *Children of migrants*, left behind in the large urban areas of countries of emigration in the South, represent a growing problem. Often relatives are nominally in charge of these children, but many, especially adolescents, are largely unprotected. The situation is particularly serious in Manila, for example, because of the number of women who migrate internationally. Migration is also the cause of a series of particularly difficult problems in countries of immigration where migrant families face new versions of industrialized urban deterioration and compete for diminishing school and health services. The children are often torn between the culture of their parents and that of the dominant society. They may suffer from various forms of discrimination. The increasing numbers of "foreign" youths appearing in statistics kept on juvenile offenders in Italy or of "black" youths in the United Kingdom may attest not only to the children's coping strategies, but also to fundamental institutional shortcomings in the host society (Blanc and Chiozzi 1992).

5. *Families in peril.* As the studies started to analyse the problems urban poor children were facing in inner-city neighbourhoods, in institutions, or on the streets, it became increasingly clear that a first tier of problems often originated from: (1) the difficulties their families and communities were confronting; and (2) the problems the children encountered in the institutions with which they had direct contact, such as schools, children's homes, correctional institutions, municipal offices, welfare agencies and the police force.

Families are a very important context for the child's survival, but also, as powerfully argued by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1986), for the child's human development. The centrality of the family diminishes somewhat, however, as the child grows older and moves from early (0-6 years of age), to middle childhood (6-12 years of age) and pre-adolescence and

adolescence (13-18 years of age). The school, peer groups, even work and street settings, acquire increasing importance in the child's life as more of the child's time is spent away from adults and in the company of peers. These settings allow the child to exercise independent thinking and self-control in the context of relationships among equals. By the time the child becomes an adolescent, other factors, such as puberty, cognitive advances, the development of self-identity and concerns for future occupational choices and economic independence, become important as well. All along, as the child prepares for full adult independence, he or she also continues to rely on the family for emotional support, example and approval (Collins 1991, Lerner 1991). However the ability of the family to contribute positively to the child's growth and development at different points in time is greatly influenced by the degree to which other people, policies, or institutions function as a support.

In each of the five countries of the study, families of the urban poor are undergoing considerable transformations connected with rural-to-urban migration, rapid urbanization, and industrialization. These transformations are particularly evident in Brazil where the support of the extended family, which was not uncommon in rural areas, diminishes significantly in the urban context. Nuclear households, often female-headed, are becoming increasingly frequent. In Italy, the large families of the post-war recovery have been replaced by small nuclear families with a rapidly decreasing number of children. In 1981, 53 per cent of Italian families were nuclear families. By 1986, the number had risen to 67 per cent (ISTAT 1986 cited in the XXI Conference of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs). Therefore, even in Italy which is known for its strong family base, the extended family has decreased somewhat in importance in terms of the emotional, and other, support it can provide a child, but it is, nevertheless, much more prominent than in other industrialized or post-industrial countries. Divorce and female-headed households have only recently increased, and are still far from the rates of Northern Europe or the United States (Saraceno 1990).

In the post-industrial United States, instead, the extended family has largely disappeared, replaced by a household that has become both residentially and emotionally nuclearized. About half of all first marriages end in divorce (Cherlin 1988, Danziger and Stern 1990), introducing much instability in the lives of children. However, because black, hispanic, new immigrant, and other poor families each present specific characteristics, generalizations about the family can only be broadly indicative.

In India, the Philippines, and even Kenya, while there are comparable tendencies towards nuclearization and some loss of extended family networks and relations, the existing family systems are still relatively strong and closely connected. This is particularly true in India. Relatives in rural areas may, for example, provide support to young girls who, after they reach puberty, are sent back "home" from the city by their migrant parents to find a husband. Because of the strong family orientation, it is very difficult to determine how many households are female-headed in a poor urban community because women are unwilling to admit to this unhappy condition. The estimates, however, range from 20 to 25 per cent.

The Philippines, which has a very different, bilateral family system, remains, in part probably because of Catholicism, remarkably closely knit, despite the enormous economic pressures the urban poor have had to withstand since the late 1970s. In Kenya, types of families vary according to ethnic background and are changing in somewhat different ways and at different speeds within each ethnic group. However, in general, rapid transformations are taking place throughout the country in family organization, relations and support systems. The community as it exists in rural areas (where support, food and lodging are customarily provided to any person, especially children, asking for help) is disappearing, while households headed by single women, often migrants from rural areas, are rapidly becoming more numerous in the poor urban neighbourhoods of Nairobi or its peripheral towns. In fact, rural areas show a declining sex ratio from 169 in 1962 to 111 in 1989 (Mbuguru 1991). As early as 1982, approximately one third of the households in the lowest-income category in Nairobi were headed by women, while in Mombasa the percentage was slightly lower (27 per cent) (Manundu 1992).

6. *Beyond family and community into the larger society.* The increasing importance, as the child grows up, of other domains of his/her life, and in particular, of peer socialization (in school, while playing, on the streets) and "other-adult" interaction (beyond family members) has important implications for action. Until the child reaches the age of six (some would say, until age three), immediate family members are the main, and often the only, support system needed to ensure the child's healthy growth and development.

The situation changes in middle childhood when the exposure to external influences acquires increasing importance in shaping the child's development (Bornstein 1992, Collins 1991, Lerner 1991). It becomes, at this stage, particularly important to monitor and improve other aspects of the child's surroundings. A careful examination of the life histories of

children in especially difficult circumstances collected by the Country Teams provides a clearer understanding of the paths to disadvantage. The life histories illustrate not only how the urban environment affects urban communities and families, and through them, their children, but also how it directly affects children from middle childhood onwards. They also reveal how the broader social environment contributes to urban children's current disadvantaged situation: consistently, the children tell of unproductive encounters with specific municipal institutions, such as schools, the police, and the transportation system.

As the Country Teams highlighted, street children (mostly boys) tend to run away from home in middle childhood, frequently between 10 and 12 years of age. The reasons for their often only temporary rebellion are complex and highly emotional (and characteristic of the turmoil of a ten- to twelve-year-old boy), but almost always involve the overlap of familial and non-familial constraints and opportunities at work, in school or on the streets. As soon as the children run away, they are exposed to the often violent world of employers, exploiters and police, many of whom contribute to the worsening of their situation. Some children seem to deal with this better than others when certain conditions are met. The studies have generally made it clear that to reduce the number of children in especially difficult circumstances, interventions need to make a positive impact on family conditions *and* the social environment, city management and institutions that are meant to sustain both the family and their children. Each of these observations, discussed comparatively, will generate specific recommendations for programmes.

A Comparative Assessment of Policies and Programmes

The following considerations were important in the search for innovative approaches to the problems and the assessment of their validity:

(a) *Better diagnoses of children's problems.* There is a need to move beyond a vision of "problem children" as isolated, diseased individuals and see the origins of their problems in their family, community, school, work and leisure settings. We must take into consideration how societal institutions (for example the police) are dealing with children. Children's problems are in part economic, but they are, in important ways, also social, organizational and institutional. Their problems reflect our current limited (and often hurried) approaches, and our often distorted vision of existing problems. Documented analyses of failures and

successes of interventions are rarely available. Few records are kept of the varied elements that have made effective interventions work.

(b) *The need to gain a clearer awareness of how children's problems relate to broader urban issues*. This must include an analysis of how urban planners and policy-makers, often heavily criticized by the public, can actually manage, without exceeding their financial and political means, to create a generally "healthier" environment for urban dwellers, and especially children.

(c) *This awareness and better diagnoses must go hand in hand with systematic and integrated planning*. *Ad hoc* and piecemeal responses are often a major part of the problem. To be effective, planning must implement a set of key lessons obtained from the analysis of successful programmes.

The literature surveyed and the initial research studies confirm that most cities in the developing world have been caught between increasing urbanization and decreasing governmental financial resources. As a consequence, children find fewer and fewer opportunities for healthy physical and mental development in urban settings. Cities in the industrialized world also have less money today to spend on social programmes. Lacking sufficient love, care, attention and supporting relationships as families and support systems fail them, children and young people are increasingly vulnerable to street violence and substance abuse.

Many of the municipal governments which have tried to respond to these problems lack the time and money to plan effectively. Moreover, the strategies they devise are often piecemeal and *ad hoc*, as are those at the national level. Both levels tend to focus only on extreme problems, such as child abandonment and substance abuse, and often offer particularly costly and extreme "solutions", such as institutionalization or imprisonment.

As central planning and administration fall into widespread discredit, municipal governments are faced with new opportunities and challenges; they are increasingly viewed as the level of government best able to respond to the needs of the people. As a result, more and more services that were previously the responsibility of the central government are being run at the local level. This decentralization goes hand in hand with increased democratization which enables the urban community as a whole to participate in the decisions and programmes that directly affect its members. Because of these trends, mayors now have

greater potential to bring about real social progress in their communities and enhance the well-being of the community's children.

Municipal governments generally assume the responsibility for providing basic urban services which are essential for the health and well-being of the inhabitants, particularly children. These services include piped water supplies, sanitation, drainage, garbage collection, and sometimes schools and health centres. Municipal governments, however, need funds to permit them to fulfill these, and other, basic responsibilities without continual recourse to higher levels of government. Moreover, they will require additional financial and human resources to meet the many new and important challenges they will have to face in the immediate future.

The five Country Teams concentrated on cities that are experimenting with innovative approaches to children's problems. They assessed several important aspects in each city: its potential for economic growth, its administrative capabilities, and the social conditions of its children. They also surveyed public bodies and NGOs working on children's issues, and assessed their programme approaches and the extent of their coverage.

After an initial analysis of material produced by the five Country Teams and a reading of the relevant literature, the project organizers concluded that:

- Contrary to what was initially believed, only a minority of the children seen on the streets of major urban centres world-wide are actually living on their own without a family. Their numbers are, however, growing. These children are exposed to the street's most exploitative conditions, but they often also respond to them in resilient and creative ways.

- Many of the problems urban children face can be traced to the extremely severe urban conditions in which they live. Their families are struggling to cope in a climate of great uncertainty, mistrust and marginalization. Some adults, overburdened by the pressures they face within and outside the family, may abuse, mistreat or generally neglect their children. There are already many children in these difficult circumstances in the poor urban settlements not only in the South, but also - and surprisingly because of decreasing family size and much higher standards of living - millions in the more deprived areas of the cities of the industrialized North. And their numbers are increasing.

- World-wide, governmental and non-governmental programmes benefit at most 10 per cent of the total number of children living and/or working on the streets.

- World-wide, urban programmes benefit only a limited number of all children 0-18 years of age; the gap between programmes and potential beneficiaries is bound to widen given the rapidly increasing size of the urban child population.

- Coverage only increases significantly when municipal governments, NGOs and the city residents themselves - especially the children, families and communities - strike an alliance and jointly seek ways to address the problems. This has been clearly documented by the study teams in Brazil, India, Kenya and the Philippines.

We need a strategy that will address problems at their source while providing support for the children who are already in especially difficult circumstances. We need an overall integrated plan at municipal level that will contain protective and preventive elements, will adopt a new vision of children and families in cities, and will be able to build flexibility on the most innovative actions and strategies developed so far. The final study, forthcoming in 1993, in order to work towards such a plan will include: (1) an analysis of programmes at the municipal level in the areas of education (formal and non-formal), participation, leisure activities, vocational training and employment that address in integrated and innovative ways the problems of street children and of other urban children in especially difficult, or difficult, circumstances; and (2) comparative assessments of the policies and strategies that have contributed towards placing children more prominently on municipal agendas. These assessments will yield lessons that will be available to the cities for further reflection and policy consideration.

1. *CEDC interventions in relationship to overall urban programmes.* An assessment was made of innovative urban CEDC interventions and programmes, particularly for street children and abused, neglected and abandoned children, and their relationships to other programmes for urban poor children. The Country Teams first assessed the overall effectiveness of CEDC programmes, their impact in terms of numbers, and, when possible, their cost-effectiveness. The Country Teams also carried out comparative analyses of programme goals, aims, resources and implementation methodologies in order to identify consistent patterns across countries. Programmes selected for the study were particularly innovative in their content, method and management, and favoured, whenever possible, more preventive approaches, that is, community-based and/or participatory approaches.

It has been important to analyse approaches which take into account the complexity of the problems faced by children in especially difficult circumstances. Effective approaches

protect the children while providing them with opportunities to learn, to raise their self-assurance, and to develop skills which will enable them to make a better future for themselves. These approaches also provide support to families and communities, whenever possible, in order to help ensure long-term support to the children.

In the Philippines, the Country Team assessed street-based, community-based and center-based programmes for street children in Metro Manila, Cebu, Davao, and Olongapo. These programmes are carried out jointly by government agencies, NGOs, and community representatives, and have entered into various partnerships with different department of the municipal authorities. In Brazil, the Country Team analysed innovative governmental and especially non-governmental CEDC interventions in six Brazilian metropolitan areas (Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza, Salvador and Recife). In Kenya, the Country Team examined, among others, the activities of the Undugu society, an important Nairobi-based NGO which started from a drop-in center for street children and progressively enlarged the scope of its activities to innovative and preventive work with poor urban communities. Some of their recent programmes are educational. Although much can be learned from the approaches of such programmes, their coverage is generally quite limited. Interestingly, northern Italy has developed a channel for municipal governments to contact NGOs for provision of certain social services. Kenya and India are also experimenting in similar directions.

As a second step, the Country Teams sought to identify broader integrated approaches that combined city-wide emergency support with long-term strategies for the protection of all children and families living in impoverished areas. Within this framework, the Country Teams assessed the degree of co-ordination between CEDC interventions and more preventive programmes targeting a broader range of urban children.

In the Philippines, some cities have established multi-level councils or task forces in which government agencies and NGOs join together to address specific problems. In Brazil, state governments have organized and funded agencies in Goiânia, São Paulo, Parana and other cities which provide a flexible system of services for street and working children as an alternative to full institutionalization. They have succeeded in obtaining support for this initiative from the local business community and the police. In Kenya, the Nairobi task force has initiated some important collaborative activities involving city governments, NGOs and disadvantaged urban communities. Examples of this kind of collaboration are being

documented, analysed and compared in order to identify the elements that contribute to their success or failure.

In both of the preceding cases, the situational analyses prepared for each city by the Country Teams are providing baseline information on problems specific to CEDC or to disadvantaged urban children more generally. This information will facilitate future monitoring.

2. *Municipal mobilization.* In order to learn from existing innovative municipal experiences and make them available to a broader public, the Country Teams documented mobilization on behalf of children within municipalities against the backdrop of national-level mobilization. This documentation of ongoing processes has entailed:

- An assessment of the information available before municipal mobilization started;

- An analysis of the extent to which advocacy efforts at the national, state and municipal level have changed public attitudes towards especially disadvantaged children, and how these new perceptions have subsequently inspired new and more effective municipal policies;

- An analysis of the city's resources - financial and especially human - that have been mobilized in the process. This includes the children themselves, their families and communities, community-level NGOs, the business sector, academic institutions, the police, and local and national media.

- An analysis, and clear documentation, of particularly innovative municipal policies and programmes developed in each of the five countries, such as those presented in the Brazilian report (Rizzini et al. 1992).

- An assessment of the strategies and actions that make these policies and programmes particularly effective in each city. Such strategies include: (a) the development of appropriate information; (b) the encouragement of coordinated national and municipal advocacy on behalf of children; (c) a solid base in the urban community on which to build the programme initially (a well-established NGO, a forum of NGOs, or an action-oriented academic institution); (d) the creation of broadly representative local Councils or Task Forces which maintain an active dialogue on the problems faced by children in the city; (e) the institutionalization of these Councils or Task Forces and their programmes within the municipal government; (f) the presence of a coordinating office, located if possible within the municipal hall, which acts as a liaison, and broker, between the municipal departments and

the community residents participating in the programme; (g) an appropriate legal framework and provision of legislative powers to the Councils or Task Forces in order to ensure long-term effectiveness; (h) improved management, coordination and convergence of municipal activities; (i) the optimization of municipal resources and investments; (j) the empowering of people and communities; and (k) an increased awareness of the need for a new vision of children, shared by all city residents and reinforcing their sense of joint responsibility.

- An assessment of the underlying strategies that contributed to the relative success of these policies and programmes, including, for example: (a) the identification of "change" agents and social entrepreneurs at the municipal level, and beyond; (b) the support of such agents through the provision of a "creative space" which allows them to maneuver as they elaborate innovative approaches to the problems; (c) the realization of a partnership with urban poor communities based on trust; (d) the utilization of research and of "immersion" (direct personal exposure to the everyday lives of impoverished urban children and families) to engage all city sectors by making them both more aware and better informed of the problems of others, especially the children and the urban poor in the same city; and (e) the establishment of forums in which various community sectors can discuss the problems of children in the city as a step preceding the consolidation of Councils or Task Forces, but also as an on-going monitoring and mobilizing mechanism;

Again a comparative analysis allows us to emphasize recurrent features and thus reinforces the argument for including such features in other programmes. The common underlying assumption is that a complete transfer of the aspects of any programme or policy across countries is unlikely to occur, or even to be effective, because of the very different subjective and objective contexts that exist from one country, or even one city, to another. However, certain features of particularly effective programmes or mobilization strategies can prove to be very useful in bringing about comparable improvements and actions across countries. The Philippine urban programme, whose national advocacy dimensions were in part inspired by a similar programme in Brazil, but which developed in quite different directions, is a good example of the transference of tested programme approaches.

VI. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the project has been to undertake studies in five countries in order to gain a greater understanding of children in especially difficult circumstances in urban areas,

especially street and working children; and to reflect on innovative municipal policies and programmes for urban children. This includes a concern for decreasing the number of children who live and work on the streets, protecting them, but also preventing them from being abused, mistreated or abandoned, by: (a) creating a healthier environment for them (and their parents); (b) involving children, parents, and communities in the search for ways to address their problems and in carrying out the strategies devised; (c) identifying, and providing assistance to, those children and families which appear to be most at-risk; (d) suggesting policy and programme approaches which would better support them in the future.

The project is in the process of developing policy papers that will contribute towards mobilizing the energy and creativity of local governments, NGOs and communities, and towards harnessing their efforts in order to create a better urban environment for children. It is seeking to do this in the context of the urban area-based model of multi-sectoral action and public participation. In view of the Summit's overall goals for the 1990s, and in particular those relating to education, women and children in especially difficult circumstances, it proposes to:

- develop new ways to generate information, to monitor and diagnose children's problems as they emerge, especially the problems related to children between the ages of 6 and 18 years, and to recognize the resourcefulness of these children's and their families' coping strategies;

- contribute to developing a more positive and integrated vision of children and their families, and a clearer idea of how municipalities can improve their strategies for child survival, protection and development;

- provide specific examples of how the well-being of children has been placed high on the political agenda of specific cities, and analyse the main elements which contributed to this choice;

- contribute with experiences of mobilization and with specific strategies towards creating municipal plans of action for urban children that adopt a new vision of children in cities, emphasize the interdependencies among individuals, the environment, lifestyles, and children's well-being, establish systems to protect children from severe stress, abuse, neglect and mistreatment, and engage all people in the municipality, from their different positions of strength, in meeting these objectives.

We are faced with an important challenge in this decade. The number of urban children is expected to grow significantly during the 1990s. World-wide trends towards democratization and decentralization are providing new opportunities at the municipal level. National political leaders have committed themselves to adhering to the standards set down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children and to fulfilling the goals established at the World Summit for Children. By giving the problems of disadvantaged urban children a clearer contextual definition, and learning from the innovative policy experiences and programmes which have successfully reached out to children and their families, we hope that this first study on urban children and families will be useful as a starting point in the search for more effective strategies.

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